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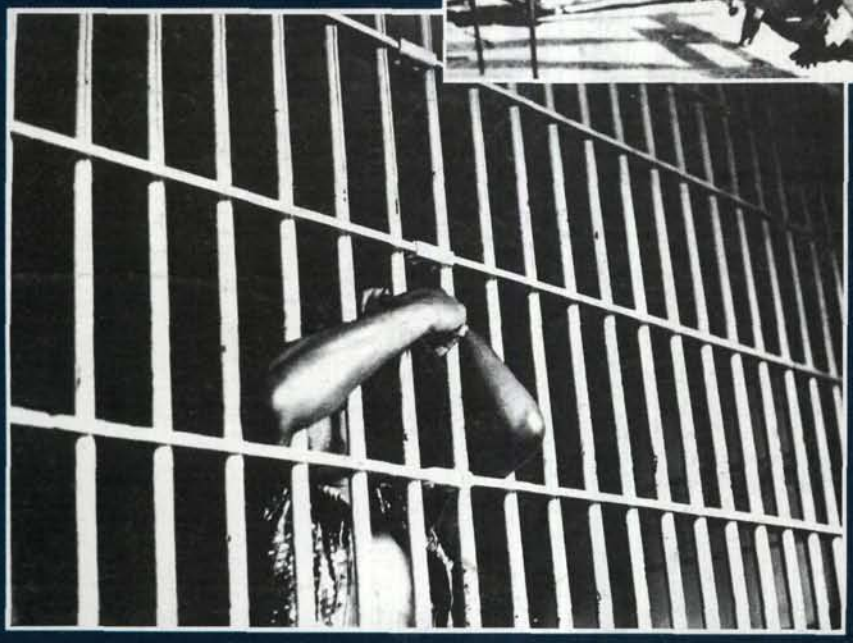

*Stephen Chapman on Cultural Superiority*

Tad Szulc on Yugoslavia's Future • Murray Sayle on a Japanese Spy

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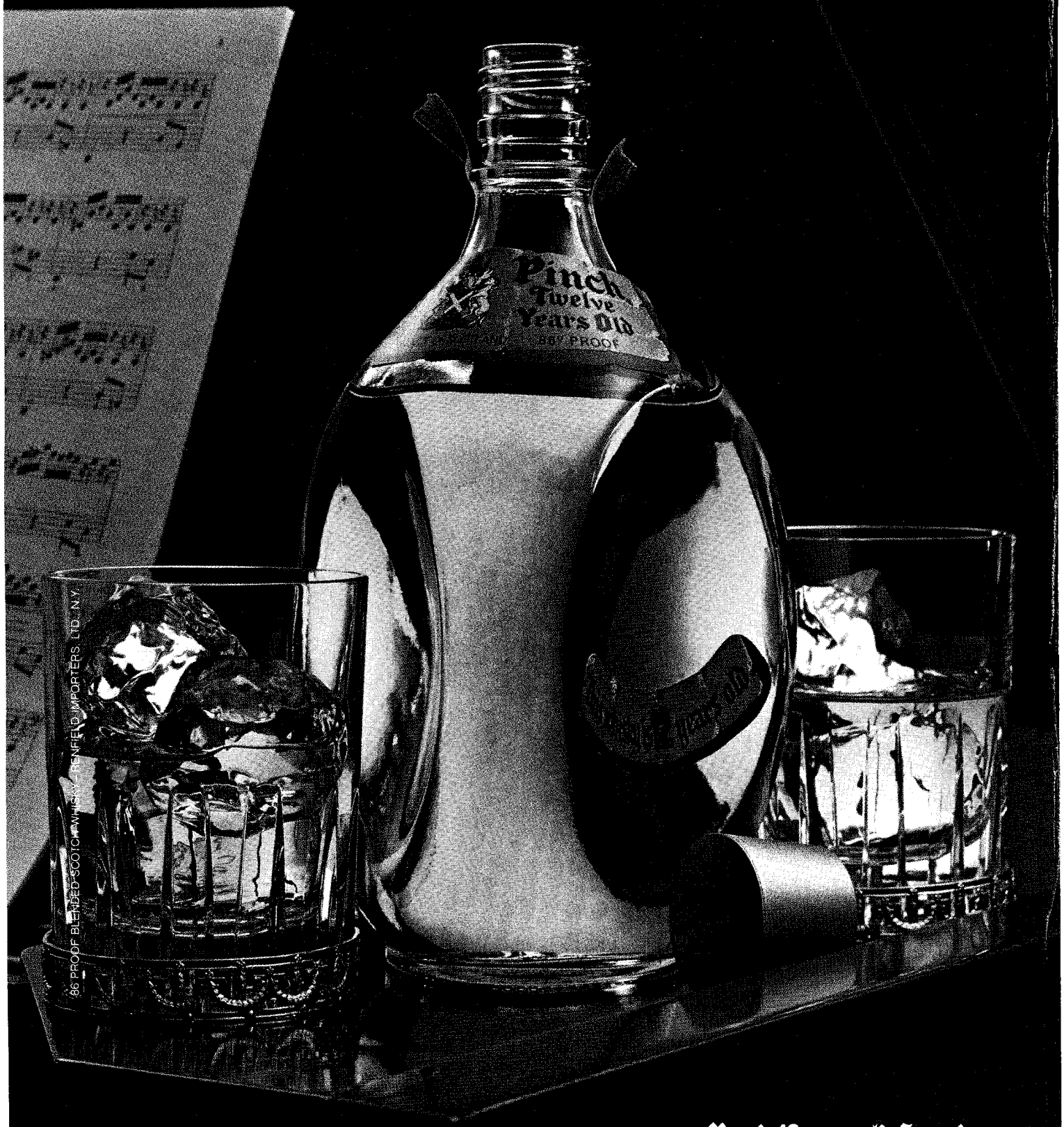
The room was covered with oriental rugs.
I leaned deep into my chair and poured us both a Pinch.
"I love this room," she said.
"With you in it."

Precious moments deserve more than ordinary scotch.

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# TRB

from Washington
March 8, 1980

## The Kings Are Dead

Now this is singular . . . the capacity audience at the Kennedy Concert Hall is seated, Andrés Segovia is about to begin . . . suddenly there is commotion round the presidential box in the center gallery. People turn, crane, stand. There is a cry: Rosalynn is entering the box, Jimmy following. Cheers rise! It is an electric moment. There is a standing ovation.

This is a well-bred, upper-class audience, but this is not perfunctory applause; there is real emotion. You feel it. Has the president won some notable victory? On the contrary: there is the energy crunch (gasoline next year may be two dollars a gallon); runaway inflation reaches 18 percent; hostages still in Iran, Russians in Afghanistan. All this and the uncertainty of the draft. A few months ago Carter's poll rating was even below that of the outgoing Nixon. And now they cheer! (Next day will bring the New Hampshire primary.) What has happened?

Patriotism has happened, that's what. The people are rallying behind the president in time of crisis as they always do. It is part of this strange office of the presidency. As Duke professor James Barber wrote, "We elect a president and insist that he also be a king." In his king-like role (Iran-Afghanistan and the like) we support Carter. But he also is a political leader dealing with nitty-gritty domestic issues. These threaten to trip him up.

Last August at Carter's low point the *New York Times* carried two articles: writer Allen Drury telling the president to resign as "the weakest and most incompetent president since Martin Van Buren," and a Catholic psychiatrist from Loyola University saying that Carter needed psychiatric treatment. Well, they said worse things about Herbert Hoover, and Hoover in 1932 had no foreign crisis to rescue him. Now the New Hampshire primary is over and the Massachusetts primary ahead. TRB sticks by his prediction in this space last November 24: "I think Carter will get the nomination and beat Kennedy. . . . I am inclined to think Carter will be defeated in the election if he is nominated. . . . The hardest thing for Carter to beat next year probably will be the economy." In other words, Carter's critical point comes when the foreign affairs issue yields to the pork chops issue. It may not be long now.

There's a man running for the US Senate down in South Carolina who thinks we have a poor political system and who thinks something can be done about it. Not just a little change but a big change. He is political science professor Bill Kreml, on leave from the University of South Carolina, and he stood with three other professors the other day in a gallant band to lift their banner. Included were William Schaefer of American University, Robert McClure of Syracuse University, and David Olson of the University of North Carolina. Nearly everybody nowadays, it seems, deplores the anomalies of our system of selecting a president. Carter had to spend two years at it; now New Hampshire gives new examples in the ethnic duck joke of Ronald Reagan and the row among GOP candidates over who should speak on a TV show.

In criticizing the system the danger is that democracy itself comes into question. John W. Gardner, founder of Common Cause, called ours a "special interest state" under which "the system lies paralyzed." Senator Edward Kennedy once said: "the heart of the problem is that the Senate and the House are awash in a sea of special-interest lobbying and special-interest campaign contributions." And in *The Third Century* (Hoover Press), Stanford University professor Alex Inkeles observed: "The Americans' previously exceptional pride in their governmental institutions and their vibrant confidence in their personal political efficacy has vastly declined. What was previously a great, almost deadening 'Hurrah' has now shrunk to a barely audible whisper."

Bill Kreml is making his token run now for the Senate, which he calls "perhaps the most archaic legislative body among the principal western states." He also is telling voters what he thinks of the larger system. Very well, you say, let's grant that we could use reforms; a two-year presidential campaign does seem silly compared to Canada's two months and Britain's three weeks. But our Constitution is almost impervious to structural change; Article V sets rules for a second Constitutional Convention, but who wants to go through that?

Bill Kreml's proposal is to create an elite constitutional commission of 56 members operating under a restricted mandate; let them retire and consider the problem in the same relative seclusion as did the original Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, May-September, 1787; let them offer a more flexible instrument to the nation, perhaps in the direction of a parliamentary system, as an appropriate part of the bicentennial anniversary of the Constitution, seven years hence.

At a Kreml rally Professor McClure exclaimed, "I think the great bulk of the founding fathers would be appalled to know the document they wrote 200 years ago has not substantially changed."

It is a magnificent instrument; it has done noble service. But it consciously set up a weak government in fear of monarchs. It is filled with little veto points, and the bigger the bureaucracy, the more of those points exist; fine for the days of clipper ships, dangerous in the jet age. Carter feels them in trying to get an energy package. In his book *Twilight of the Presidency*, George Reedy despaired of getting constitutional change: "The more probable outcome of our present difficulties will be a 'man on horseback,'" he wrote in 1970.

No, says Bill Kreml. He thinks the essence of the great document can be preserved while it is adapted to modern times.



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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*Cover: Top photo—A Pakistani convicted of committing immoral acts being lashed before 10,000 people, October 1979. UPI photo. Bottom photo—A US prisoner. Photo by Fred W. McDarrah. Article on page 20.*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

March 8, 1980

# A Tin Medal for Diplomacy

The Iran impasse has acquired that distinctive Jimmy Carter stamp. Having repeatedly called the situation intolerable and a solution urgent, he now recommends patience and optimism. Having grandiosely announced economic sanctions, he has quietly let them die aborning. Having ordered Iranian diplomats out of this country, he has failed to notice that many of them are still here. Having declared that an international commission of inquiry sitting in judgment on the United States is too high a price to pay for return of the hostages, he has arranged to pay the price without collecting the goods.

Is there a crisis or isn't there? Carter continues to insist that he's too wrapped up in international events to defend his dismal record on the campaign trail. But he had time to stage an elaborate televised celebration of American Olympic medalists the day before the New Hampshire primary. Carter's jingoistic performance did not thrill those, including this journal, who support his call for a boycott of the Moscow summer Olympics on the grounds that the Soviets will use the occasion for propaganda purposes, as the Nazis did in 1936. Carter called the athletes "modern-day American heroes" and declared, "For me as president of the United States of America, this is one of the proudest moments that I have ever experienced." Those who don't support the boycott, especially the summer athletes, will be harder to persuade now that athletic competition must give way to more important matters in world affairs.

Carter assured the Olympic hockey team by phone after their victory over the Russians that he had spent the day "watching TV with one eye and working on Iran and economics with the other." Even with only part of one eye, the president should be able to see what his crisis diplomacy has achieved in its first four months. It has legitimized the seizure of American diplomats as a way to begin diplomatic negotiations. It has debased the currency of America's word in international affairs by combining rhetorical overkill with little or no follow-through. It has approved in advance the humiliation of this country by an international tribunal sponsored by the United Nations—an institution that has rigorously avoided passing moral judgments on governments, however repugnant, for 35 years. Whether these international setbacks would be worth enduring in order to achieve the safe return of 50 American citizens is an agonizing question. Since they manifestly have not achieved that goal, they add up to an unmitigated disaster.

There was a better way, and there still is. It would combine a straightforward acknowledgment of past American misbehavior with a straightforward assertion of American power in the face of intolerable Iranian misbehavior now. First, there should be a real embargo of all trade with Iran, as complete as American diplomatic pressure and selective use of American sea power can make it. This includes food imports and it includes oil exports. Such an action will impose sharp short-term sacrifices on our allies (who are much more dependent on Iranian oil than we are), but they should be made to understand that this is what allies are for. In general, they benefit from the alliance more than we do. Of course we should share the sacrifice as much as possible, most obviously by instituting gasoline rationing to curb our voracious appetite for oil.

In Iran's present precarious state, an embargo is likely to hurt, and quickly. Hinting darkly at punishment that will occur after the hostages are safely home, as the Carter administration has been doing (in alternation with promises of military aid under the



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same circumstances), is a surefire formula for delaying their release. A genuine tough stand is not likely to drive the Iranians into the arms of the Russians. The Soviet invasion of neighboring Afghanistan should weigh more heavily on the Iranians than on us, and should increase the pressure on Iran, not the United States, for a quick end to the crisis.

Along with some genuine toughness, there would be nothing wrong with some genuine contrition. This country has abused its power in the past in its relationship with Iran, and saying so will make it easier to use our power in a justified cause now. Instead of accepting a humiliation without offering an apology, which seems to be the formula the Carter lawyers and the Waldheim worldocrats have been working toward, we should offer an apology without accepting a humiliation. It is humiliating, not to say absurd, to recognize the authority of representatives from nations like Syria, Algeria, and France to pass moral judgment on the actions of the United States. It is even more humiliating to negotiate such an arrangement in exchange for restoring the freedom of innocent American citizens. But it would not be humiliating for the president to say that the United States is honest enough and self-confident enough to apologize unilaterally for interfering in Iran's affairs and for shoring up a despotic regime.

These two steps would make clear that we do recognize the Iranians have legitimate grounds for bitterness, and would give their government a graceful way out of a dilemma of its own devising, while also making clear that nothing justifies taking American diplomats hostage and that America still is in a position to do something about it. The messages we have been sending are exactly the opposite.

## On the Hill

# It's Your Funeral

One revealing oddity about the fever of congressional revulsion against the Federal Trade Commission is the difference in symptoms on opposite sides of Capitol Hill. Both Houses of Congress have produced FTC authorization bills containing some form of congressional veto over future commission actions, and squelching outright a few of the FTC's current projects. But the anathemas differed. The Senate killed the FTC's investigation of advertising on children's television. The House version leaves the kidvid rulemaking untouched. But the House voted to deny the FTC authority to regulate the funeral industry, a subject that barely arose in the Senate debate. A conference committee will try to reconcile the two versions early in March. Representative Bob Eckhardt, Democrat of Texas, a strong FTC supporter, has been running some hearings in an attempt to embarrass his House colleagues out of their enthusiasm for special treatment of the funeral industry.

If any commercial field could benefit from a few rules to protect consumers, it is the funeral industry. A funeral is a major purchase made only once or twice in a lifetime, usually in haste and under great emotional strain. Consumers are ignorant, indisposed to go price shopping, and uniquely vulnerable to aggressive salesmanship. It is a classic example of a situation where the textbook image of a free market—vigorous bargaining between knowledgeable buyers and sellers—does not apply.

As regulations go, the FTC's proposed funeral rules were exceedingly mild. Funeral directors would have been required to make available an itemized price list before the sale (standard practice for almost all other businesses, large and small); to give price information over the telephone when requested (which many funeral directors refuse to do); to ask permission before embalming (many customers erroneously believe embalming is necessary by law or for public health); and to refrain from giving misleading information about state laws (such as suggesting that a casket is required for cremation). These are hardly onerous, expensive, or time-consuming regulations, the funeral directors' protestations notwithstanding. A 1976 version of the proposed rules would have required that cheap coffins be available in attractive colors as well as the grotesque (often pink) hues used to discourage their purchase. At that time, a funeral industry consultant told the Council on Wage and Price Stability that the cost of compliance would be around $50 million. When the FTC eliminated the cheap coffin provision, as well as a half-dozen other requirements, the industry cost figure mysteriously remained at $50 million. The average cost of a funeral and burial in the United States today is about $2400. Defenders of the FTC claim that these few simple rules would reduce that average by $600.

The man who took up the gauntlet for the beleaguered funeral industry was Representative Marty Russo, Democrat of Illinois. (Russo cast the decisive committee vote in 1978 against President Carter's hospital cost containment bill.) Rather than argue the merits of the proposed rules, Russo objected to the way they had been written. In the early 1970s, according to Russo, the arrogant young Turks at the FTC "read [Jessica] Mitford and got the idea that all funeral directors are pigs and slobs." The commission staff then undertook a "biased investigation" in violation of procedures laid down by Congress. Worst of all, according to opponents of the rule, the FTC proceeded on the basis of a minuscule number of consumer complaints. Russo and company stress that 92 percent of the funeral industry is small businesses, and insist the states can regulate them adequately.



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# Correspondence

## Congressional inquiry

*To the editors:*

Shirley Hazzard's reference to the "cursory congressional inquiry" ("The League of Frightened Men," *TNR*, January 19, 1980) into UN finances conducted jointly by two House Foreign Affairs subcommittees, on one of which I serve as chairman, was reminiscent of the "realistic" *Washington Post* reporting on the subject. The subcommittee not only held two extensive hearings on UN financial practices, but prepared a staff study containing recommendations on ways to improve financial management in the United Nations system. Hazzard's statement that "UN officials were not called upon to testify" at the hearings is untrue. It is my subcommittee's practice to invite UN officials to testify at each hearing concerning a UN organization. In every case, however, the organization has informed the subcommittee that its policy, similar to the policy of most foreign governments *and newspapers*, is not to permit its personnel to testify before national legislative bodies. Indeed, the Canadian member of the UN Board of Auditors, other UN finance officers, and the author of the *Washington Post* series all declined to appear before the subcommittees for just such a reason.

*Don Bonker, Chairman*
*Subcommittee on International Organizations*
*House of Representatives*
*Washington, DC*

## Undelivered favors

*To the editors:*

If I understand Nathan Lewin correctly ("The Trouble with ABSCAM," *TNR*, February 23, 1980), he seems to be saying that we should prosecute legislators only when they actually have perverted the governmental process, perhaps in an irreversible way or with ramifications that are hopelessly complex; but "not yet" when a public servant merely enthusiastically stuffs bills into his pockets in exchange for favors as yet undelivered.

In a recent affair in Tennessee, various persons in and around the governor's office were indicted on "clemency for cash" charges involving inmates of the state's prisons. One of the defenses raised by some of the persons charged was that they couldn't really deliver the clemency, anyhow. It smacks of special pleading to impugn government's efforts to rectify itself and to deal with white-collar enterprises with sophistication and subtlety equal to their execution by raising distracting pleas that, after all, nothing happened.

*Rodney C. Bryant*
*Woodbury, Tennessee*

## Machismo

*To the editors:*

The fact that police units trained to intervene in domestic crises are taught to "concede explicitly a man's masculinity" in addition to giving him the respectful and sympathetic hearing the woman evidently can expect ("What's New in Murder," *TNR*, January 26, 1980) is a profound condemnation of the way males and females are conditioned in our society.

*Rosamond Potter*
*Chicago, Illinois*

## Bush-whacking

*To the editors:*

Your three February 16, 1980 articles on George Bush ("The Last Convertible," "Upstairs, Upstairs," and "Character? Indeed."), listed his background in detail—even his day school, dog's name, and branch of the service! How did all three writers "overlook" Bush's former membership in the Council on Foreign Relations? He was a director of that organization (along with Henry Kissinger) until he resigned last year.

The most important thing that could be said about George Bush is that he is the Rockefeller candidate for the Republican nomination. The same fellow who gave you "Jimmy who?" is giving you "George who?" this year.

Are you too polite to mention these political realities?

*Lawrence E. Langdon*
*Cottage Grove, Oregon*

*To the editors:*

I am not a supporter of George Bush, yet as one who was present at the speech in Concord, New Hampshire, referred to in Walter Shapiro's article of February 16, I find it necessary to come to his defense. The question asked by the handicapped man was well reasoned and dealt with an issue on which Mr. Bush, as a presidential candidate, already had an opinion: the cost of programs for the handicapped. Neither the question nor the questioner needed any excuses. Mr. Bush's forthright response was dignified and impressive. He did not alter or soften his position, or try to use the man's question to play on the emotions of the crowd. In an otherwise undistinguished speech his response to the question was a moment of dignity, a moment that softened my reactions to his opposition to the "giveaway" of the Panama Canal and his admiration that "transcends politics" for the CIA.

*Charles Forrest*
*New Haven, Connecticut*

## Plus ça change . . .

*To the editors:*

A few words on the importance of conserving oil: "For God's sake, be economical with your lamps and candles! not a gallon you burn, but at least one drop of man's blood was spilled for it." The *New York Times*, 1980? No. *Moby-Dick*, 1851.

*Mark A. Johnson*
*Central Missouri State University*
*Warrensburg, Missouri*

## Fiscal good sense

*To the editors:*

Your February 23 editorial "Time For Controls?" is an impressive and insightful analysis of the wage and price control programs of the two major Democratic presidential candidates—until the conclusion. After carefully analyzing why the costs imposed by mandatory wage and price controls would substantially exceed the benefits to be derived from them, you conclude that only Senator Kennedy "offers a serious inflation program." One must wonder how the conclusion was reached since, as the article points out, long-term mandatory controls will produce inefficiences, bureaucracies, and unfairness which Senator Kennedy has not even begun to address.

Perhaps the real answer is that no wage and price control program, whether mandatory or voluntary, can be deemed a serious response to the

*(continued on page 40)*

*The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced, and held to under 200 words. Longer letters may be abridged due to lack of space.*



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Even these procedural objections do not bear up. In hearings across the country that produced 45,000 pages of transcripts, the FTC provided ample opportunity for industry responses, which the industry happily took up. Its 45,000 pages of transcripts reflect that, although few time-pressed congressmen bothered to look. The procedural objections of the funeral directors were so weak that, according to a pro-FTC congressional staffer, a Washington law firm advised their trade association not to bother taking them to court. The National Funeral Directors Association denies this, but the fact remains that it did *not* go to court, which would have been the logical step if it truly thought there were valid legal objections to the FTC's procedure.

The FTC did not need individual consumer complaints to know about funeral abuses. There is a whole literature on the subject; Jessica Mitford's *The American Way* is only the most famous example. Moreover, funerals do not lend themselves to the kind of complaints one might expect about, say, auto repairs. People have other things on their minds, and often don't even realize they have been ripped off. As for leaving regulation of a business like funeral homes to the states, that would be fine if the states showed any inclination to act. The vast majority have not. And although funeral parlors remain small businesses, the total cost of funerals and burials in this country is $5.4 billion a year.

Lobbyists for other industries joining in the anti-FTC campaign watched jealously as the funeral directors—the least worthy imaginable cause—got four-star special treatment from the House of Representatives. Funeral directors, it turns out, have fantastic political clout. It does not come from the usual sources of high-powered Washington lobbying and hefty campaign contributions through political action committees. The NFDA, almost broke after seven years of fighting the FTC, did hire a slick Massachusetts undertaker to orchestrate its lobbying efforts and a former FTC commissioner, Everett McIntryre, to help. But the funeral directors have no Washington office and no PAC. Marty Russo, for instance, received only a few hundred dollars from friendly funeral directors, a pittance in the world of *de rigueur* special interest contributions.

The real source of political power for funeral directors lies in the relationship they share with US representatives. It is a match practically made in heaven. Funeral homes are evenly distributed throughout the country, about 20 to 25 per congressional district. When contacted by the NFDA and state organizations, more than 90 percent of all funeral directors reportedly agreed to lobby their representatives on the FTC bill. Sometimes funeral directors and legislators are quite close; several House members have funeral directors as campaign chairmen. Sometimes they are one and the same; half a dozen congressmen come from families in the funeral business. A congressman almost always will at least recognize the name when a local funeral director comes to call.

"When a new congressman is elected," says Thomas Moriarty of the Funeral Director Services Association of Chicago, a "funeral director—if he's smart—will make it his business to get to know him." Often that proves easy. According to John Linnehan, the NFDA's lobbyist, a constituent-minded congressman may go to as many as 50 funerals a year. The funeral director and his representative also are likely to meet at the Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, or Exchange clubs, which both find it advantageous to join for business reasons. Three-quarters of all funeral directors belong to at least one of these, not to mention the Chamber of Commerce and church groups. And because business presents itself only a couple of times a week for many funeral directors, plenty of time remains to lobby or to run for the state legislature, where they are among the best represented of any profession. (This makes state regulation a dubious prospect.)

Having transformed themselves from mere undertakers into what today are sometimes called "grief counselors," funeral directors usually are adept in the art of image-projection, which proves useful when it comes to making friends and influencing people. That is, after all, their business, and those same traits serve them well when it comes to arguing their case. The demeanor, even the voice, are perfect for lobbying. "It was as though an amplifier was concealed somewhere within him and his speech came from some distant and august studio," Evelyn Waugh wrote of the revered mortician Dr. Joyboy in *The Loved One*. "Everything he said might have been for a peak-hour listening period."

Of course the US representative confronts no problem when it comes to funerals for his own family, so personal experience with funeral consumer abuse is unlikely. Tip O'Neill, who told a convention of funeral directors in 1978 that they should take their case to Washington, argued in favor of the Russo amendment because his local Cambridge, Massachusetts funeral home had treated the O'Neills so fairly over the years. For O'Neill's funeral director or any other representative's to do otherwise would be idiotic, of course.

The relationship between senators and funeral directors is just not as close; the Senate jurisdictions are much larger, and there isn't the same emphasis on constituent services. This is why the funeral industry exemption got nowhere in the Senate, and this, along

**Coming:**

The Turkish Opportunity.



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with the horror stories that came out during Eckhart's hearings (like the one about the woman who paid to have her husband embalmed, even though he had been reduced to ashes in a fire), is why there's some hope the Senate-House conference committee may put the funeral regulations back on track.

**Jonathan Alter**

*Jonathan Alter* is a Washington writer.

## Politics

# Dismal Choices

To get to the bottom line right at the top: yes, I was disastrously wrong last week in predicting that George Bush would beat Ronald Reagan in New Hampshire, and I was nine points off in predicting President Carter would beat Edward Kennedy by 20. I confess to having contracted hubris by calling the Republican race in Iowa almost exactly. But I am better now. I promise not to do it again, at least not without hedging more carefully.

Last-minute events apparently were important in both the Republican and Democratic races in New Hampshire—decisively so in the Republican case. Polling during the last week before the primary, the *Boston Globe* found Bush and Reagan running neck-and-neck; Carter led Kennedy by 25 points. What apparently diminished the Democratic margin was the news that inflation had climbed to 18 percent and that the hostages in Iran may not be returned for months yet. The mounting evidence of President Carter's domestic failures probably will help Kennedy carry his home state primary this Tuesday, but outside Massachusetts Kennedy's negative ratings are so high that the Democratic party is very likely to be stuck with Jimmy Carter as its nominee even if inflation hits 30 percent and the hostages are still in Iran on November 4.

The transformation of the Republican race occurred with the Saturday night debate fiasco in Nashua, which ended with Reagan and four of the five other contenders loudly accusing Bush of arrogance and unfair play for refusing to open the proceedings to all Republican candidates. Only Phil Crane and Bush saw the event for what it apparently was: a clever Reagan trap to tarnish Bush, get Bush and his moderate rivals squabbling publicly among themselves, and make Reagan appear a heroic force for generosity, righteousness, and Republican unity. The ploy ought to raise some questions about Reagan's genuineness. Reagan claimed all through Iowa that debates were too divisive for him to participate in, then used the Nashua debate as a weapon to divide his party for political advantage. Had Reagan's sole intent been to open the debate to all candidates, he or his aides could have called Bush and the publisher of the sponsoring *Nashua Telegraph* anytime on Saturday to work out a change in what had been slated for three weeks as a two-man confrontation between the front-runners. But he sprang the all-candidates forum proposal on Bush and the newspaper only at the last minute. Reagan apparently *had* been in touch with the other candidates—they all had time to cancel other plans and show up at Nashua High School on schedule. According to Bush's campaign manager, James Baker, Bush and his advisers did not learn of Reagan's switch to the new arrangement until they arrived at the high school.

Whoever concocted this scheme for Reagan—I assume it was John P. Sears, who was repaid for his services by being sacked as campaign manager on primary day—had an acute sense for the weakness of his prey. Bush was inflexible, apparently so anxious for acknowledgment of his status as joint-frontrunner with Reagan that he could not shift positions quickly enough to settle for turning the Nashua event into another dull Republican cattle show. Bush apparently also was reluctant to cross the publisher of the *Nashua Telegraph*, who had endorsed Bush and who was adamant about staging a real debate and not another forum. Jules Witcover of the *Washington Star* quoted an unnamed Republican candidate as saying afterward: "If Bush can't handle some publisher from Nashua, how could he deal with the Russians?"

It may be over-psychologizing, but I think this anonymous candidate was on to something about Bush's character. At whatever job he's held (CIA director, Republican national chairman, UN ambassador, envoy to China), Bush never imposed strong personal control on any of the organizations he headed or bucked the system he was appointed to supervise. Rather, he eagerly carried out the orders of his superiors—Nixon, Kissinger, Ford—and acted as a cheerleader for his subordinates. For example, one of the CIA's congressional overseers reports that national intelligence estimates prepared during Bush's tenure are an unreadable maze of footnotes and counter-footnotes, meaning that instead of forcing rival intelligence agencies to come to a meaningful consensus on major points, Bush allowed each to have his say on every point, rendering the whole product of little use to top policymakers. When the CIA was criticized for not being tough enough in analyzing Soviet intentions, Bush simply appointed an outside team to deliver a hawkish second report, leaving it to the president to choose which was correct. If Bush were elected president, I would not be so worried that he'd be afraid to cross the Russians; I wonder whether, if his subordinates told him the US ought to go to war, he would have the independence of mind to tell them to go to hell.

This predilection tripped Bush up in New Hampshire not once, but twice. Not only did he fail to cross the

*(continued on page 12)*



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# MOST OF AN
# TIME IS SPEN
# YET IT'S THE
# LEAST QUAL

*It starts the moment you walk through the door.*
*The phone rings. You pick it up and listen.*
*An associate comes into your office with a problem. And you listen.*
*You rush off to one meeting after another. And listen.*
*The fact is executives spend more time listening than they do anything else.*

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*A statistic that is not only surprisingly low, but terribly costly.*

*When executives don't listen effectively, communication breaks down.*

*Ideas and information get distorted by as much as 80% as they travel through the organization.*

*Yet as critical as listening is, it's the one skill we're never really trained to do.*

*Well, as one of the world's largest corporations, we at Sperry are making sure our executives are as qualified at listening as they are at everything else.*

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*As a result, when you talk to someone from Sperry, one thing's for certain: Neither of us will be wasting time.*

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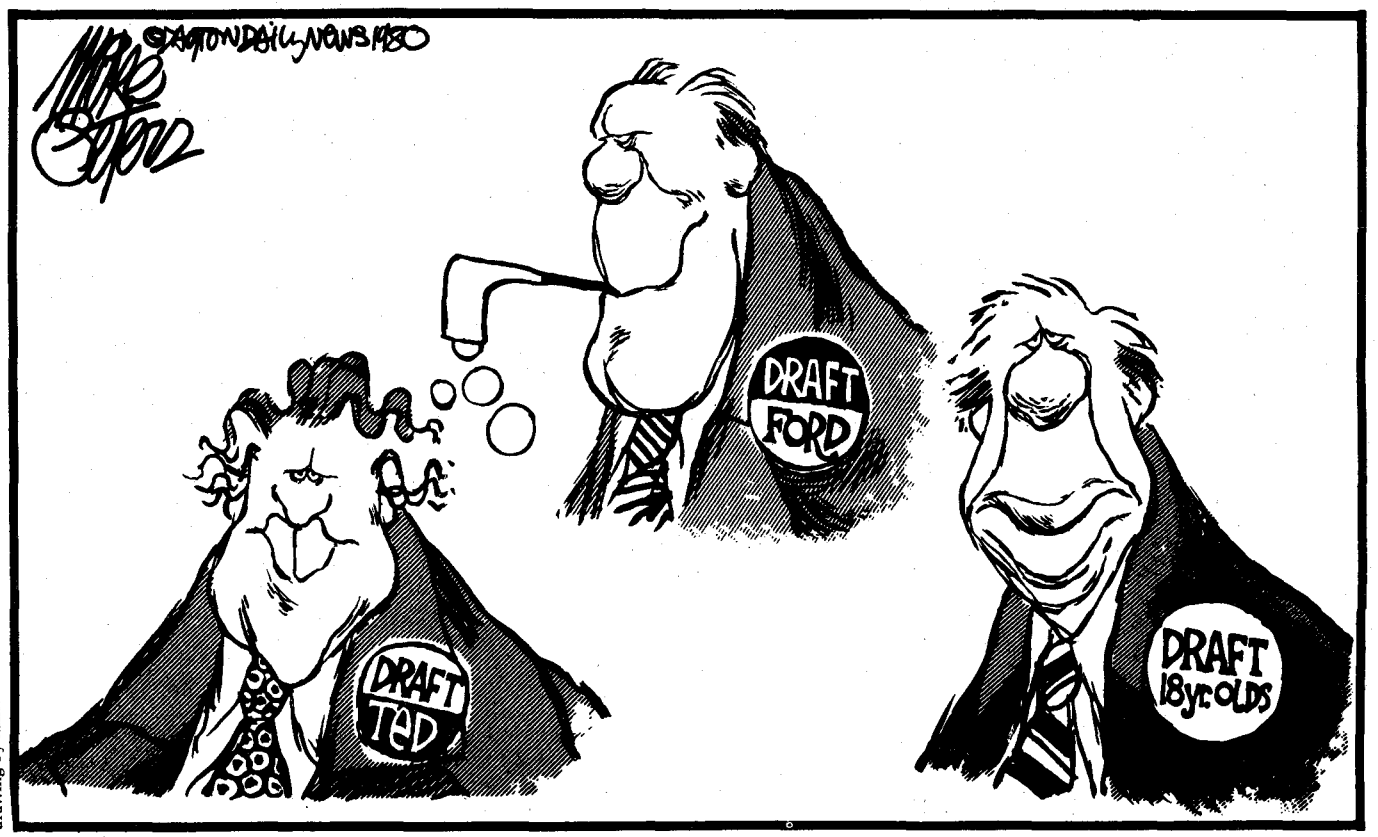
publisher, but he also failed to overrule his state campaign manager, Hugh Gregg, in making a response to the fiasco. Gregg, a stiff-necked sort of man, demands that his candidates do things his way in New Hampshire. In 1976, as Reagan's campaign manager, Gregg told Reagan to leave the state during the last few days before the primary to allow Gregg's organization to concentrate on getting out the vote. Reagan left—and lost narrowly to President Ford. This year, again, Gregg told his candidate to leave, and Bush went to Texas right after the Saturday night debate, not to return until Tuesday. As a result, in the crucial weekend period when New Hampshire was preoccupied with charges and counter-charges about the Nashua proceedings, Bush was unavailable for instant comment. His version of events got to New Hampshire voters via Gregg, in hastily prepared and desperate-sounding radio commercials, and in television news reports from Houston. TV cameras showed Bush jogging in the sun—in effect ignoring the New Hampshire voters he had expended such energy to woo over so many months.

Reagan and his handlers also knew the weaknesses of the other Republican candidates. Howard Baker, John Anderson, and Bob Dole all were fixated on the goal of being the final moderate challenger to Ronald Reagan. Bush was standing in their way. So when Reagan maneuvered Bush into his political trap, the others joined in to savage him. Each hoped, apparently, to be the prime beneficiary when soft pro-Bush votes and undecideds stampeded. In fact, all such people must have voted for Reagan, who jumped 16 points after Nashua—from 34 percent in the *Globe* poll of the previous week to 50 percent on election day. Bush dropped 12 points, from 35 in the *Globe* poll to 23 on Tuesday. Howard Baker gained only one point, from 12 in the *Globe* poll to 13 in the election. Anderson gained two points. The GOP candidates succeeded in tearing down Bush, but they also helped turn Reagan into a faraway frontrunner.

By the laws of political momentum which now seem to control American politics, it appears almost inevitable that we are going to be faced in November with a choice between Jimmy Carter and either Reagan or Bush. On the face of it, this is ridiculous. Barely five percent of the delegates to the Democratic and Republican conventions have been chosen so far, but already the ability of losing candidates to vie for a majority of the remaining 95 percent has been badly damaged. It is hard to see how Edward Kennedy or Jerry Brown could take the Democratic nomination from Carter, or how Howard Baker, John Anderson, or John Connally could upend Reagan or Bush. It is also virtually impossible for any other candidates—say, Edmund Muskie on the Democratic side, or Gerald Ford on the Republican—to swoop in at the last moment and lead his party to victory.

All of this is the consequence of the political reform movement that has swept both parties since 1972. Although the goals of reform were greater openness, fairness, and democracy in the pre-nomination process, the actual results have been to close off choices. And close them off early.

To begin with, the complexity of new reform rules inclines states to choose primary elections as a means of selecting their national convention delegates. The




drawing by Mike Peters



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number of primaries has ballooned from 17 in 1968 to 34 this year. The first major limitation this imposes on the political system is that it virtually shuts out potential candidates with important work to do and gives an advantage to people who are out of office or unemployed. Edmund Muskie, Alan Cranston, Howard Baker, state governors, and big city mayors cannot easily drop their jobs and stump Iowa and New Hampshire for months. Jimmy Carter could do it as a former governor of Georgia, and did. Ronald Reagan could do it in 1976, as a former California governor, and is doing so again. So is George Bush.

Primaries place decision making in the hands of ordinary voters and diminish the influence of party leaders, office-holders, and other "bosses." This is nice and democratic, but it has one major drawback. Most ordinary voters pay attention to politics only fleetingly and make their judgments on the basis of a handshake, maybe one speech at a rally, and images on the tube. "Bosses" tend to pay attention to politics all the time. The advantage in the new system goes to candidates who are strong on glibness, good looks, projecting a reassuring manner, avoiding difficult issues, and assembling a grassroots organization. There is no particular premium on experience in decision making and coalition building—the skills it takes to govern the United States. Jimmy Carter was great at telling people he loved them, but now inflation is at 18 percent, the Soviets are in Afghanistan, SALT is on the rocks, and US oil dependency is increasing.

"It used to be that a couple of thousand party leaders got together at the national convention to decide who the nominee would be," said Mark Siegel, former executive director of the Democratic National Committee. "Now the decision effectively gets made by a couple of thousand Iowa farmers." A longtime anti-reformer and now a Kennedy backer, Siegel is exaggerating, but his point is valid. A candidate who wins Iowa has "momentum" for winning New Hampshire, which gives him more momentum for Florida, then Illinois, and so on.

What makes momentum is equal parts media and money. Candidates who win in Iowa, like Bush and Carter, get maximum press coverage. Their poll ratings go up. Money comes in faster. It is possible for events or opponents to stop or slow a candidate's momentum. Reagan and the Nashua debate did just that to Bush. Kennedy showed signs of doing it to Carter in Maine. But candidates who can't score an early victory, who are slow picking up momentum, are likely to die off fast. The laws enacted to reform campaign finance limit individual contributions to $1000. It is no longer possible for candidates who are down on their political luck—Kennedy and Baker, for example—to keep going by calling 20 rich friends for $20,000 each. They will have to find 400 new rich friends to get the same amount of money together, and that gets hard. The more the media calls them losers, the faster their campaigns will starve to death.

If Kennedy loses the southern primaries on March 11 and Illinois March 18 and goes broke, and if Jerry Brown never becomes a serious challenger, then Carter will have the Democratic nomination in hand by April—no matter what happens to the economy or the country. Pre-reform, it might have been possible for party leaders to deny nomination to a probable loser even if he was a winner in primaries. That happened in 1952 to Estes Kefauver, whom the pros replaced with Adlai Stevenson. Now it is impossible. Convention delegates are bound for the first ballot unless released, and Jimmy Carter is unlikely ever to release them. As of March 4, it also will be impossible for any new candidate to enter the Democratic race and have a chance of winning a majority of convention delegates. On that date, filing deadlines will have passed in primary and caucus states representing 1690 convention delegates, more than the majority needed for nomination.

A comparable situation applies in the Republican party. Of the big New Hampshire losers, Dole and Crane should be out of action shortly. Connally, if we're lucky, will be out after South Carolina. Anderson, unfortunately, is likely to fade by Illinois, and Baker's money probably will run out shortly thereafter. If Baker, Anderson, or Connally could keep running and win significant numbers of delegates, there conceivably could be a deadlock at the Republican convention and a draft of Gerald Ford. With only Bush and Reagan in the race, the chances of a deadlock are minuscule. Unless Ford leaps in very soon, the prospects are that either Bush or Reagan will have the nomination locked up long before the convention. There will be a tussle between them for Massachusetts, but the winner of South Carolina and Florida will have strong momentum for Illinois, and then Connecticut, and New York on March 25.

I hesitate to predict anything anymore, but we are likely to know the nominees from both parties by April. Most of us are very likely to think the American political system could produce a lot better.

**Morton Kondracke**

The Marshal himself was optimistic.

# Yugoslavia's Trial Begins

Eleven years ago, in March 1969 at the Ninth Congress of the League of Yugoslav Communists in Belgrade, Marshal Tito was pushing 77, a ripe old age for a statesman; the main task of the Congress was to give formal approval to the mechanism of succession he had devised. Edvard Kardelj, one of Tito's oldest and closest surviving associates, had emerged as the designated successor in everything but name (the Marshal never took *that* step) in the context of a newly organized



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collective leadership. The expectation was that succession would occur within a year or two. At this writing, the 87-year-old Tito, suffering from heart and kidney problems following the amputation of a leg in January, is close to death. But the Yugoslavs have been emotionally and intellectually prepared for Tito's death and the trauma of succession for at least a decade, and there are sound reasons to believe that the national edifice he has built will survive roughly in the existing form.

History teaches us, of course, that the best-laid succession plans of absolute rulers may go awry: Stalin, Mao, and Franco are examples. Thus one should be careful with flat predictions. Still, Yugoslavia may prove to be a special case.

The mood of the 1969 Congress was strikingly self-confidant. Internationally, the situation was threatening. The Soviet Union had invaded Czechoslovakia barely six months earlier to restore orthodox pro-Moscow communism (Tito was given a wildly enthusiastic reception in Prague two weeks before the Soviet onslaught), and the Yugoslavs had mobilized, fearing that they were next in line in Leonid Brezhnev's campaign to purify ideology in Eastern Europe. Yugoslav leaders—like the man-in-the-street—were tranquil and self-assured. I recall asking a number of them the obvious question: whether they were concerned over a break-up of the Yugoslav federation (the "brotherhood in unity" that Tito had fashioned from the six republics and two autonomous regions) after the Marshal's death and whether they thought the Soviets would help to bring it about. The answers were uniformly in the negative. One evening that same week, Tito held a reception for hundreds of his wartime partisan comrades. Each man and woman was handed a red rose as he or she entered the vast hall; again the mood was euphoric, and the partisans and their children cheered the old Marshal and serenaded him with songs of the war. Tito himself was sitting on a sofa with Koča Popovič, a close friend, Scotch in hand, smiling and talking. After being introduced to him, I asked whether he was worried about the future. "You mean after I'm dead? No, I'm not worried at all. The country will survive free and independent," Tito said.

By late 1976 succession was still the principal topic in Yugoslavia, but in a more muted manner. Tito had become an octogenarian, but his authority was still absolute. In the years that elapsed since the 1969 Congress, he had purged the Communist party in Croatia—the word was that he had detected dangerous separatist tendencies in it—and was busy cleaning up the party in Serbia. The regime also claimed to have discovered a pro-Soviet plot among Yugoslav Communists. Some 70 persons were arrested. And it was suddenly less certain that Kardelj would be Tito's successor. Kardelj was ill, and the name increasingly mentioned in political circles was Stane Dolanc, then 52, the secretary general of the League of Yugoslav Communists.

During my 1976 visit to Belgrade, I paid a call on Milovan Djilas, whom I had known for a number of years, at his dark apartment on the street behind the National Assembly building. I was anxious to know his views about Yugoslavia's future in the light of his extraordinary background: the leading intellectual among Tito's early partisans, the Marshal's right hand since 1942, and, long ago, Yugoslavia's vice president. A father-son relationship had existed between them, and probably nobody knew Tito as well as Djilas; the Marshal was an exceedingly private person despite his exuberant public image. There are knowledgeable people in Yugoslavia who still are convinced that Djilas was the only man Tito really wanted to succeed him. Sadly, the two men reached a point of total ideological disagreement in 1954. Djilas lost his post, was expelled from the League of Communists, and subsequently spent nine years in prison for his critical writings. By 1976, however, Djilas could do what he pleased, and he was busy with the first chapters of the second volume of his memoirs, rich in material about Tito.

As in all our previous conversations, Djilas was genuinely free of any bitterness toward Tito. He had somehow put the prison years behind him and the warmth was still in his voice when he spoke of his wartime commander. He reminisced about the days in the early 1950s when he and Kardelj sold Tito on the concept of "self-management," now the mainstay of the Yugoslav social and economic system, and he praised Tito for comprehending so rapidly Yugoslav communism's most inventive idea. Yet he was critical of Tito's present-day handling of Yugoslav problems, most notably in the crisis of the Croatian party, and of the Marshal's opulent lifestyle.

Then I came to my key question: after Tito what? I thought that of all people in Yugoslavia, Djilas would give me the most objective and honest answer. I haven't kept notes on the conversation, but the thrust of his response was that Yugoslavs, regardless of nationality, language, or religion, had developed such an immense stake in preserving the federation that it would not crumble after Tito's disappearance.

Indeed, Yugoslavia had grown impressively in the preceding seven years. It had, at least in the north, achieved the status of a European industrial country. Old Belgrade was bursting at the seams, and a new city was built across the Sava River. Every other urban-

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We'll keep at it. Because conservation, although not itself a longterm solution to our nation's energy problem, can help buy time to find and develop lasting solutions. . . and hold down consumers' costs, too.

You can count on us to keep working at the vitally important job of slowing down electric energy consumption. We know conservation works. We've got the figures to prove it.

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dwelling Yugoslav seemed to own a car. Compared to Eastern Europe, still caught up in neo-Stalinist economics, Yugoslavia was strikingly prosperous. It had close trading ties with the European Economic Community, and extensive joint production ventures with US and other Western capital. Djilas argued that economic development under the federated system was the cement that would hold the country together after Tito. Moreover, Djilas did not think the Soviet Union would ever invade Yugoslavia. He was convinced that the Russians had learned since Tito's break with Stalin in 1948 that the country had a profound sense of independence and would fight an invasion to the last man. The Soviets would not risk a world war over Yugoslavia, said Djilas, the man who wrote the famous *Conversations with Stalin*.

Djilas's analysis appears to hold true in 1980. To be sure, international tensions are greater today than in 1976, yet Djilas's basic equation remains applicable. If the Yugoslavs did not panic after the invasion of Czechoslovakia when Tito was beginning to experiment with the succession mechanism, they are not likely to do so in the face of Afghanistan—even if, indeed, the Soviet Union is bent on expansionism. Besides, Yugoslavia has fresh assurances from President Carter to "do what, in our opinion, would be best for them and for us."

Internally, there have been certain modifications. Edvard Kardelj has died, and Tito has discouraged talk of a successor, preferring to rely on his latest collective leadership apparatus: the nine-man state presidency and a 24-man Presidium of the League of Communists over which he exercised his personal stewardship. In the weeks since the Marshal's illness became public, the regime has been warning against the appearance of self-appointed "little Titos," a clear message to overambitious leaders.

Obviously, no country can be governed indefinitely by a collective leadership of this size, and sooner or later a top leader, or two, or a "troika"—is certain to emerge. It would be idle to engage in long-term predictions, but the man currently enjoying the greatest prestige is 68-year-old Vladimir Bakarič, like Tito, a Croat. But Bakarič is said to be in ill health, and a younger man—such as Slovenia's Stane Dolanc—may come to the top. Meanwhile, Lazar Kolisevski, vice president of the collective presidency until his rotating term expires in May, will act as the nominal chief of state, but probably not as head of the League of Communists. The man who assumes the unquestioned leadership of the party will be Tito's real successor, and that process probably will take some time to evolve.

This is not to say, however, that the Yugoslav succession will be smooth or easy. Without Tito's towering personality, innumerable conflicts—of personalities, nationalities, ideologies, and special internal and external interests—inevitably will come to the fore. The more affluent republics of the north, Slovenia and Croatia, will strive to assert their influence over the poorer ones of the center and the south. The latter may seek to combat it. Many of the deep differences within Yugoslavia, papered over in Tito's life, will surface painfully. Problems inherent in "self-management" will become exacerbated. The Soviets may escalate their support for Bulgaria's claim on Macedonia, searching for local allies. And there will be "little Titos" jockeying for position until Yugoslavia weathers its trial of succession.

**Tad Szulc**

The last not-ready-for-prime-time player?

# Teddy's Media Bust

Ted Kennedy, along with his campaign manager, brother-in-law Stephen Smith, and his top advisers, seemed to believe that the press would give him a free ride in the 1980 presidential contest. From the beginning, Kennedy and his inner circle refused to heed warnings from friendly media consultants that it would be dangerous to depend on unpaid media to transmit consistently favorable images of the candidate and his programs. The crises in Iran and Afghanistan were undoubtedly major factors in dampening the Kennedy effort in the early going; but complaints by Kennedy staffers that Carter has triumphed so far by wrapping his campaign in the flag don't tell the whole story. There has been no worse miscalculation in the Kennedy organization than its failure to appreciate the role of a sophisticated, well-planned media campaign. Through New Hampshire, Kennedy's slapdash version has been a bust.

Early last fall, several consultants were interviewed personally by Kennedy and Smith for the job of media coordinator. Prominent among them was David Garth, whose successful clients include New York mayor Ed Koch and New York governor Hugh Carey. Garth urged the campaign to address the Chappaquiddick question directly and early. Because Garth wanted to play a role in developing themes and keeping the campaign on a consistent course—as he does with every campaign in which he works—he was regarded by some Kennedy aides as too pushy. "With Garth," says Peter Edelman, Kennedy's issues director, "there was no meeting of the minds." Garth's advice on Chappaquiddick was ignored.

Other media consultants interviewed also insisted on a central position in conceptualizing and executing the themes of the campaign. One suggested that a variety of top media professionals be assigned to run parts of the Kennedy campaign in different states or regions. Such demands were viewed as highly unreasonable, partly because it was assumed that as outsiders, the



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media specialists would threaten the status of long-time insiders in the campaign. The problem was resolved by not hiring a coordinating media consultant at all.

Instead, Stephen Smith brought in an old family friend, Herb Schmertz, Mobil Oil's public relations wizard, to thrash out a media plan. His perception of media was naturally that of a corporate executive. When he was Mobil's publicist, his ads, as typified by those featured on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*, had a confrontational tone. In modern campaign media, however, the stress is not necessarily on confrontation but on sophisticated persuasion. Nowhere is the contrast between the two approaches more vivid than in the use of polling. Political consultants employ polls as a strategic instrument to locate which voters on which issues can be moved into the candidate's column. Schmertz, by contrast, uses polls to verify his position, to prove he's correct. When consultants on the fringes of the campaign pressed Schmertz about hiring a pollster, he balked. He didn't want one. Schmertz believed that because *he* knew what the issues were, the campaign didn't need the expensive services of a pollster to explain the obvious. "He wasn't sensitive to the attitudinal nature of polling," gripes one consultant who was involved. As a result, no polling was begun for the Kennedy campaign until December 1, when pollster Peter Hart came aboard.

Among other consultants courted by the Kennedy campaign was David Sawyer, who helped engineer the successful campaign of Boston mayor Kevin White last fall. Sawyer was hired to videotape the senator's announcement speech for possible use in making 60-second and 30-second ads; the spots were never ultimately authorized and the videotape remained in a can. "The early part of the campaign should have been a process of getting to know the senator," says Sawyer. "Ninety-five percent of the people knew who he was, but they didn't know him as an individual. What they knew was the myth and the legend. And they knew Carter was doing a poor job. They were looking for a viable alternative. Hopes for Kennedy were great. The job of the campaign was to establish who he was." But the senator's handlers felt his identity was already well known and his attraction obvious. Since they had no polls to prove otherwise this view went unchallenged, except by consultants who tried over and over again to stress the utility of survey research.

When Herb Schmertz left the campaign after a seven-week stint his position was filled by Philip Bakes, former counsel to the Civil Aeronautics Board, who had assisted Senator Kennedy in pushing through airline deregulation. Bakes had neither campaign nor media experience. As Stephen Smith's deputy, and because nobody was directing media, he filled the vacuum. "It's all Greek to me," he jokes. Bakes views consultants as prima donnas. "I now know what it's like to manage Maria Callas," he observes.

"Phil Bakes is a lovely guy," says Tony Schwartz, a consultant who has produced television ads for every Democratic presidential candidate since Lyndon Johnson and who produced radio spots for Kennedy in Iowa. "But I was shocked that a lawyer without previous experience was put in charge of the campaign. That was surprising to me. The campaign isn't being conducted the way it could be." Schwartz feels he was hamstrung in Iowa by the absence of reliable data to guide him—the professional equivalent of giving a soldier marching orders without first providing him with a map. After Iowa, Schwartz quit the campaign.

Charles Guggenheim, another Kennedy family friend who produced TV spots for Robert Kennedy's campaigns, and whose latest project was a half-hour film for the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, was hired to produce television ads. Guggenheim is highly regarded as a documentary filmmaker, but is regarded as somewhat old-fashioned in his approach to making campaign spots. For the Iowa campaign he produced candidate-as-talking-head, voter-as-man-on-the-street spots. When he brought Kennedy and voters together in one commercial, Kennedy, unsuspectingly caught by the cinema vérité style, fidgeted with his hands. The subliminal message: Kennedy was nervous, perhaps even uncomfortable in his role as candidate.

Schwartz recommended a colleague, Joe White, as his replacement. At a meeting of top aides, White's proposed radio scripts were ripped to shreds; none of his work was ever aired. Guggenheim, who participated in the session on White's ads, then took over the responsibility for radio as well as television. Yet Guggenheim never really took control, either. Commercials continued to be written by a small circle of campaign insiders, and within this group everyone has a crack at making his or her points in the ads.

The failure of running a media campaign by committee was made especially evident after Kennedy's Georgetown speech, in which he seemed at last to project a rationale for his campaign. With the New Hampshire primary in mind, the campaign bought a half-hour time block on Boston television, which blankets southern New Hampshire, for the senator to redeliver the address with a few extra lines thrown in about Chappaquiddick. In this version of the speech there was no cheering throng; the candidate sat behind a desk. Meanwhile, the Kennedy staff in New Hampshire, reinvigorated by the Georgetown performance, wanted ads made from a videotape of the speech to dramatize the sense of momentum they felt their candidate now possessed. Unfortunately, there was no videotape of the Georgetown speech. This was a deliberate decision. "If you tried to make a pretty film it might be nice," explains Philip Bakes. "But the purpose of buying that half hour was to show a thoughtful approach. It was an easy decision to make."

For New Hampshire, Guggenheim turned out committee-scripted spots; the principal copywriters were Peter Edelman and Stephen Smith. In one New



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Hampshire ad, Kennedy is once again a talking head, seated at a desk behind which an American flag is strategically positioned. He lambastes Carter on inflation, Iran, and Afghanistan. Then a voice-over says "Kennedy" when the name is flashed on the screen, as if mere mention of it were a sufficiently positive statement. The ad is a paradigm of a media campaign gone wrong: the TV spot as press release, arrogant and stiff, with no declaration of themes or even of slogans. "Ads shouldn't be separate from the cerebral policy message of the campaign," says Philip Bakes, defending the Kennedy strategy. "To turn over your message on television and radio to media advisers, who are not those advising on the issue, would be a gross mistake."

Ted Kennedy has been labeled one of the last New Deal liberals, an increasingly rare specimen. It was widely assumed, however, that his presidential campaign would be a modern masterpiece, a contemporary replay of past Kennedy efforts, replete with thrilled crowds, dynamic candidate, and captivated press. Yet, on the technical level, the Kennedy campaign has been something of an anachronism. It's probably the last campaign of its kind we'll ever see on the presidential level.

**Sidney Blumenthal**

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Spy scandal, Japanese style.

# The Mole Who Sold Sonys

## by Murray Sayle

*Tokyo*

The day after winsome, pot-smuggling former Beatle Paul McCartney was hustled onto a plane out of town, promising never to return, his place in Tokyo jail, and on Japanese front pages, was taken by 58-year-old retired major general Yukihisi Miyanaga of the "Ground Self Defense Force" (Japanese army, to you). Miyanaga and two serving junior officers were charged with passing military secrets to the Soviet Union. We still have only a cloudy idea of what the general and his colleagues might have been spying on but, thanks to the unusually talkative Tokyo Metropolitan Police, we know just about everything else there is to know about them.

Here we might pause to wonder what breaches of military security have to do with Tokyo's finest. Is the Japanese FBI too busy tailing musicians to go after spies? The answer, of course, is that there is no Japanese FBI. In fact, according to the Japanese Constitution, there is not supposed to be an army, either, and thus there should be no military secrets: ". . . land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized." That seems plain enough English, which happens to be the language the Japanese Constitution was written in, back in 1946, by General Courtney Whitney's Government Section of the US Occupancy of Japan. (The intention was to forestall the Russians, then reported to be working on their own Japanese Constitution.)

General Douglas MacArthur revived the Japanese Army in 1950 with 75,000 men, so the US army of occupation could go to war in Korea. To preserve appearances, the Japanese phoenix was called the National Police Reserve. To safeguard civilian control and head off possible military coups, the new-old army was placed firmly under the supervision of bureaucrats from the Japanese Police Ministry.

General Miyanaga is a product of the old Imperial Military Academy, from which he graduated in 1940 with specialties in artillery and Russian language. Although nearly half his class never came home, Miyanaga spent a comfortable war on Hachijojima, one of the many islands the Americans overlooked. Afterward, there were some unhappy years as a farmer and surveyor's clerk before he was able to join the reborn and renamed army in 1951. Miyanaga may well have been a Communist, or least a Russian sympathizer at that time, when the Japanese international outlook was dominated not by fear of the Russians, but by resentment of the "devil English-Americans" with their subhuman culture, crass materialism, and revolting taste in loud, throbbing music. The moral discipline and intellectual certainty of Marxism attracted many Japanese during the post-war years (just as, decades

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later, these features attracted the Viet Cong).

Red mole or not, Miyanaga spent the whole of his second army career in intelligence, eventually as the head of intelligence for the northern command on Hokkaido, the Japanese island nearest to Russia, and finally as deputy head of the army intelligence school. He was promoted to major general the day before he retired, in 1974, and opened a small electronic appliance business in Tokyo. According to the police, this modest storefront was, in fact, a cover-up for his espionage work.

The first leaks from police headquarters reported Miyanaga as saying, at his arrest, "I did it for peace." This suggests political conviction, a "sincere" motive which Japanese would respect. Later versions from the same garrulous sources painted a very different picture. On finding the competition in the appliance game too hot, it was said, Miyanaga approached the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo looking for a job, such as import-export, in which he could use his fluency in Russian. What better job than spying? the Russians allegedly said, and so Miyanaga organized his own spy ring with two serving members of the intelligence department who kept him supplied with Japanese classified material. Miyanaga also allegedly kept his contacts up to date by popping into his old office from time to time, which is certainly normal for Japanese in just about any occupation, in a society where men spend their working lives in the same tight group.

Miyanaga's real motive, according to this revised authorized version, was money. His marriage had broken up while he was on duty in Hokkaido, according to the police source; he had become involved with Another Woman, who made the customary demands for exotic drinks, costly gifts, and ruinously expensive treats. "If it had not been for that woman, none of this would have happened," Miyanaga's son was quoted as saying. The lady, allegedly a bar hostess, has not been further identified.

Miyanaga allegedly made 60 information drops over the years, getting up to $1600 a crack, a grand total of $80,000, from his Soviet spymaster, the military attaché at the Tokyo Embassy, Colonel Yuri Kozlov. The exchanges of secrets for cash, both in buff envelopes, were said to have taken place at apparently casual encounters in the shadow of the Russian Orthodox church of St. Mikolai in Kanda, a garish Tokyo entertainment district. (What an opening this will be, when they make the movie.) Miyanaga is said to have received coded instructions broadcast from Vladivostok, fixing the time for these treasonable trysts, on his Sony portable radio. Police said the meetings were observed by a young policewoman and policeman who held hands and posed as lovers—not the most convincing touch of the story, as Japanese tend to regard any body contact in public as a display of animal passion, yet another failing of devil English-Americans. The Soviets, naturally, have admitted nothing, but Colonel Kozlov caught the next plane to Moscow the day after Miyanaga's arrest, announcing that his mother was ill.

The content of Miyanaga's buff envelopes has been the subject of conflicting and inconclusive leaks, and an even bigger mystery is why Miyanaga was arrested at all. The secret-girlfriend thesis would suggest that he had been spying for at least 11 years, while the Hokkaido mole version would make it nearer 30. Unless John le Carré is misleading us, surely the appropriate response to discovering someone like Miyanaga up to no good is to "turn" your mole, feed him disinformation, and foul up the Soviets' whole Far East intelligence operation. Why make a public fuss? Almost as soon as the story broke, the chief of staff of the GSDF, General Shigeto Nagano, resigned, to take the blame for the disgraceful spying that had been going on in his command. This was not enough to satisfy Japanese notions of collective responsibility: next his civilian boss, the director general of the Defense Agency, Enji Kubota, was compelled to resign this quasi-ministerial job (Defense, again for squeamish reasons, does not rate a full minister). Kubota, only three months in the saddle, complained piteously that he should not be held responsible for 30 years of treason, but he was forced out anyway. Kubota's successor, Kichozo Hosoda, called a press conference the day after his appointment, and made the mistake of observing that the Soviet Union poses a "serious threat" to Japan. After a storm of left-wing protest, Hosoda hastily amended this to the government's official line, that the Soviets are a "potential threat" to Japan, and only narrowly managed to hang on to his new job himself.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Foreign Ministry disclosed that it is no longer passing on information to the Defense Agency, in view of the agency's leaky security arrangements. A writer dispatched to Hokkaido by the *Mainichi Daily News* reported that bartenders and taxi-drivers (Japanese journalists work much like Westerners) were uneasy about the possibility of a Russian invasion, and an old lady remembered fleeing to the mountains during the brief Soviet incursion onto the island of 1945. Every day the Japanese papers publish photographs of Soviet missile cruisers, destroyers, land craft, nuclear submarines, and minesweepers steaming purposefully south past the Japanese home islands, presumably bound for the wars in Iran or Afghanistan. Japanese right-wing radicals wearing helmets and fake military uniforms have been demonstrating outside of Tokyo Municipal Detention House, where Miyanaga is lodged.

In a totalitarian country, all this would sound suspiciously like a major policy switch, with a convenient dissident being softened up for a show trial. On our side of the world, it might be attributed to an administration whipping up war hysteria in preparation for a khaki election. But Japan is not eager to join the new cold war bandwagon. Defense is a surefire vote loser in Japan, which is why the ministry always



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goes to one of the out-of-power factions within the ruling Liberal coalition.

The Japanese business community is not at all keen on talk of boycotts or trade sanctions, against either Iran or the Soviets. Mitsui has just announced it is resuming work on its one-billion-dollar petrochemical plant in Iran, with the backing of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Toshiwo Doko, chairman of the Japanese Employers' Federation, complains that talk of sanctions against Russia endangers Japan's plans for exploiting the natural resources of nearby Siberia. He suggests sulking instead: "in relations with a person you don't like, you can just refrain from speaking to him, rather than going so far so to say directly 'I don't like you.'" The Defense Production Committee of the Employers' Federation has celebrated the end of detente by proposing that Japanese industry should get access to advanced US military technology, which could then be manufactured in Japan and exported to the US, or to anyone else who needs it (read: has money).

Why, then, the Miyanaga uproar? Normally Japanese policy is a cautious spy and let spy, but there are rare exceptions. In 1956 one Colonel Yuri R. Rastvorov, a KGB man posing as a Soviet diplomat in Tokyo (if this, in fact, involves a pose) defected to the CIA. Interviewed by Japanese prosecutors, he named three Japanese Foreign Ministry officials, one of whom committed suicide. Last October, genial Stanislaus ("Stan") Levtechenko, a KGB man in Tokyo posing as a journalist for the Moscow *New Times* (for which he wrote occasional crushingly boring articles on Japanese bamboo production) followed the same path. Stan now lives in that legendary small American town where everyone has nose jobs and tinted contact lenses. The binocular-wielding, hand-holding Tokyo police investigation of General Miyanaga seems to have followed Stan's tip-off; and police-army rivalries did the rest.

The general and his two colleagues were charged under a Japanese version of the Official Secrets Act (Japanese soldiers are technically civil servants), which carries a maximum fine of $240 and a year in jail. According to the charge the secrets the conspirators disclosed were a classified compilation of articles from foreign military journals, all openly published. They made these disclosures, it seems, to each other; the Soviet Union was not mentioned in the charge. General Miyanaga should be back at his appliance store in plenty of time for World War III. But it doesn't look as if he, or Japan, will be taking part—except, perhaps, as suppliers of electrical appliances.

Your left hand or a decade in an American penitentiary: you decide.

# The Prisoner's Dilemma

## by Stephen Chapman

> If the punitive laws of Islam were applied for only one year, all the devastating injustices would be uprooted. Misdeeds must be punished by the law of retaliation: cut off the hands of the thief; kill the murderers; flog the adulterous woman or man. Your concerns, your "humanitarian" scruples are more childish than reasonable. Under the terms of Koranic law, any judge fulfilling the seven requirements (that he have reached puberty, be a believer, know the Koranic laws perfectly, be just, and not be affected by amnesia, or be a bastard, or be of the female sex) is qualified to be a judge in any type of case. He can thus judge and dispose of twenty trials in a single day, whereas the Occidental justice might take years to argue them out.
>
> —from *Sayings of the Ayatollah Khomeini* (Bantam Books)

One of the amusements of life in the modern West is the opportunity to observe the barbaric rituals of countries that are attached to the customs of the dark ages. Take Pakistan, for example, our newest ally and client state in Asia. Last October President Zia, in harmony with the Islamic fervor that is sweeping his part of the world, revived the traditional Moslem practice of flogging lawbreakers in public. In Pakistan, this qualified as mass entertainment, and no fewer than 10,000 law-abiding Pakistanis turned out to see justice done to 26 convicts. To Western sensibilities the spectacle seemed barbaric—both in the sense of cruel and in the sense of pre-civilized. In keeping with Islamic custom each of the unfortunates—who had been caught in prostitution raids the previous night and summarily convicted and sentenced—was stripped down to a pair of white shorts, which were painted with a red stripe across the buttocks (the target). Then he was shackled against an easel, with pads thoughtfully placed over the kidneys to prevent injury. The floggers were muscular, fierce-looking sorts—convicted



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murderers, as it happens—who paraded around the flogging platform in colorful loincloths. When the time for the ceremony began, one of the floggers took a running start and brought a five-foot stave down across the first victim's buttocks, eliciting screams from the convict and murmurs from the audience. Each of the 26 received from five to 15 lashes. One had to be carried from the stage unconscious.

Flogging is one of the punishments stipulated by Koranic law, which has made it a popular penological device in several Moslem countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and, most recently, the ayatollah's Iran. Flogging, or *ta'zir*, is the general punishment prescribed for offenses that don't carry an explicit Koranic penalty. Some crimes carry automatic *hadd* punishments—stoning or scourging (a severe whipping) for illicit sex, scourging for drinking alcoholic beverages, amputation of the hands for theft. Other crimes—as varied as murder and abandoning Islam—carry the death penalty (usually carried out in public). Colorful practices like these have given the Islamic world an image in the West, as described by historian G. H. Jansen, "of blood dripping from the stumps of amputated hands and from the striped backs of malefactors, and piles of stones barely concealing the battered bodies of adulterous couples." Jansen, whose book *Militant Islam* is generally effusive in its praise of Islamic practices, grows squeamish when considering devices like flogging, amputation, and stoning. But they are given enthusiastic endorsement by the Koran itself.

Such traditions, we all must agree, are no sign of an advanced civilization. In the West, we have replaced these various punishments (including the death penalty in most cases) with a single device. Our custom is to confine criminals in prison for varying lengths of time. In Illinois, a reasonably typical state, grand theft carries a punishment of three to five years; armed robbery can get you from six to 30. The lowest form of felony theft is punishable by one to three years in prison. Most states impose longer sentences on habitual offenders. In Kentucky, for example, habitual offenders can be sentenced to life in prison. Other states are less brazen, preferring the more genteel sounding "indeterminate sentence," which allows parole boards to keep inmates locked up for as long as life. It was under an indeterminate sentence of one to 14 years that George Jackson served 12 years in California prisons for committing a $70 armed robbery. Under a Texas law imposing an automatic life sentence for a third felony conviction, a man was sent to jail for life last year because of three thefts adding up to less than $300 in property value. Texas also is famous for occasionally imposing extravagantly long sentences, often running into hundreds or thousands of years. This gives Texas a leg up on Maryland, which used to sentence some criminals to life plus a day—a distinctive if superfluous flourish.

The punishment *intended* by Western societies in sending their criminals to prison is the loss of freedom. But, as everyone knows, the actual punishment in most American prisons is of a wholly different order. The February 2 riot at New Mexico's state prison in Santa Fe, one of several bloody prison riots in the nine years since the Attica bloodbath, once again dramatized the conditions of life in an American prison. Four hundred prisoners seized control of the prison before dawn. By sunset the next day 33 inmates had died at the hands of other convicts and another 40 people (including five guards) had been seriously hurt. Macabre stories came out of prisoners being hanged, murdered with blowtorches, decapitated, tortured, and mutilated in a variety of gruesome ways by drug-crazed rioters.

The Santa Fe penitentiary was typical of most maximum-security facilities, with prisoners subject to overcrowding, filthy conditions, and routine violence. It also housed first-time, non-violent offenders, like check forgers and drug dealers, with murderers serving life sentences. In a recent lawsuit, the American Civil Liberties Union called the prison "totally unfit for human habitation." But the ACLU says New Mexico's penitentiary is far from the nation's worst.

That American prisons are a disgrace is taken for granted by experts of every ideological stripe. Conservative James Q. Wilson has criticized our "[c]rowded, antiquated prisons that require men and women to live in fear of one another and to suffer not only deprivation of liberty but a brutalizing regimen." Leftist Jessica Mitford has called our prisons "the ultimate expression of injustice and inhumanity." In 1973 a national commission concluded that "the American correctional system today appears to offer minimum protection to the public and maximum harm to the offender." Federal courts have ruled that confinement in prisons in 16 different states violates the constitutional ban on "cruel and unusual punishment."

What are the advantages of being a convicted criminal in an advanced culture? First there is the overcrowding in prisons. One Tennessee prison, for example, has a capacity of 806, according to accepted space standards, but it houses 2300 inmates. One Louisiana facility has confined four and five prisoners in a single six-foot-by-six-foot cell. Then there is the disease caused by overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and poor or inadequate medical care. A federal appeals court noted that the Tennessee prison had suffered frequent outbreaks of infectious diseases like hepatitis and tuberculosis. But the most distinctive element of American prison life is its constant violence. In his book *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice*, Charles Silberman noted that in one Louisiana prison, there were 211 stabbings in only three years, 11 of them fatal. There were 15 slayings in a prison in Massachusetts between 1972 and 1975. According to a federal court, in Alabama's penitentiaries (as in many others), "robbery, rape, extortion, theft and assault are everyday occurrences."

At least in regard to cruelty, it's not at all clear that



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the system of punishment that has evolved in the West is less barbaric than the grotesque practices of Islam. Skeptical? Ask yourself: would you rather be subjected to a few minutes of intense pain and considerable public humiliation, or to be locked away for two or three years in a prison cell crowded with ill-tempered sociopaths? Would you rather lose a hand or spend 10 years or more in a typical state prison? I have taken my own survey on this matter. I have found no one who does not find the Islamic system hideous. And I have found no one who, given the choices mentioned above, would not prefer its penalties to our own.

The great divergence between Western and Islamic fashions in punishment is relatively recent. Until roughly the end of the 18th century, criminals in Western countries rarely were sent to prison. Instead they were subjected to an ingenious assortment of penalties. Many perpetrators of a variety of crimes simply were executed, usually by some imaginative and extremely unpleasant method involving prolonged torture, such as breaking on the wheel, burning at the stake, or drawing and quartering. Michel Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* notes one form of capital punishment in which the condemned man's "belly was opened up, his entrails quickly ripped out, so that he had time to see them, with his own eyes, being thrown on the fire; in which he was finally decapitated and his body quartered." Some criminals were forced to serve on slave galleys. But in most cases various corporal measures such as pillorying, flogging, and branding sufficed.

In time, however, public sentiment recoiled against these measures. They were replaced by imprisonment, which was thought to have two advantages. First, it was considered to be more humane. Second, and more important, prison was supposed to hold out the possibility of rehabilitation—purging the criminal of his criminality—something that less civilized punishments did not even aspire to. An 1854 report by inspectors of the Pennsylvania prison system illustrates the hopes nurtured by humanitarian reformers:

> Depraved tendencies, characteristic of the convict, have been restrained by the absence of vicious association, and in the mild teaching of Christianity, the unhappy criminal finds a solace for an involuntary exile from the comforts of social life. If hungry, he is fed; if naked, he is clothed; if destitute of the first rudiments of education, he is taught to read and write; and if he has never been blessed with a means of livelihood, he is schooled in a mechanical art, which in after life may be to him the source of profit and respectability. Employment is not his toil nor labor, weariness. He embraces them with alacrity, as contributing to his moral and mental elevation.

Imprisonment is now the universal method of punishing criminals in the United States. It is thought to perform five functions, each of which has been given a label by criminologists. First, there is simple *retribution*: punishing the lawbreaker to serve society's sense of justice and to satisfy the victims' desire for revenge. Second, there is *specific deterrence*: discouraging the offender from misbehaving in the future. Third, *general deterrence*: using the offender as an example to discourage others from turning to crime. Fourth, *prevention*: at least during the time he is kept off the streets, the criminal cannot victimize other members of society. Finally, and most important, there is *rehabilitation*: reforming the criminal so that when he returns to society he will be inclined to obey the laws and able to make an honest living.

How satisfactorily do American prisons perform by these criteria? Well, of course, they do punish. But on the other scores they don't do so well. Their effect in discouraging future criminality by the prisoner or others is the subject of much debate, but the soaring rates of the last 20 years suggest that prisons are not a dramatically effective deterrent to criminal behavior. Prisons do isolate convicted criminals, but only to divert crime from ordinary citizens to prison guards and fellow inmates. Almost no one contends anymore that prisons rehabilitate their inmates. If anything, they probably impede rehabilitation by forcing inmates into prolonged and almost exclusive association with other criminals. And prisons cost a lot of money. Housing a typical prisoner in a typical prison costs far more than a stint at a top university. This cost would be justified if prisons did the job they were intended for. But it is clear to all that prisons fail on the very grounds—humanity and hope of rehabilitation—that caused them to replace earlier, cheaper forms of punishment.

The universal acknowledgment that prisons do not rehabilitate criminals has produced two responses. The first is to retain the hope of rehabilitation but do away with imprisonment as much as possible and replace it with various forms of "alternative treatment," such as psychotherapy, supervised probation, and vocational training. Psychiatrist Karl Menninger, one of the principal critics of American penology, has suggested even more unconventional approaches, such as "a new job opportunity or a vacation trip, a course of reducing exercises, a cosmetic surgical operation or a herniotomy, some night school courses, a wedding in the family (even one for the patient!), an inspiring sermon."

**Coming:**

Tad Szulc on French Recalcitrance.

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Nick Kotz on ABSCAM Press Coverage.



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This starry-eyed approach naturally has produced a backlash from critics on the right, who think that it's time to abandon the goal of rehabilitation. They argue that prisons perform an important service just by keeping criminals off the streets, and thus should be used with that purpose alone in mind.

So the debate continues to rage in all the same old ruts. No one, of course, would think of copying the medieval practices of Islamic nations and experimenting with punishments such as flogging and amputation. But let us consider them anyway. How do they compare with our American prison system in achieving the ostensible objectives of punishment? First, do they punish? Obviously they do, and in a uniquely painful and memorable way. Of course any sensible person, given the choice, would prefer suffering these punishments to years of incarceration in a typical American prison. But presumably no Western penologist would criticize Islamic punishments on the grounds that they are not barbaric enough. Do they deter crime? Yes, and probably more effectively than sending convicts off to prison. Now we read about a prison sentence in the newspaper, then think no more about the criminal's payment for his crimes until, perhaps, years later we read a small item reporting his release. By contrast, one can easily imagine the vivid impression it would leave to be wandering through a local shopping center and to stumble onto the scene of some poor wretch being lustily flogged. And the occasional sight of an habitual offender walking around with a bloody stump at the end of his arm no doubt also would serve as a forceful reminder that crime does not pay.

Do flogging and amputation discourage recidivism? No one knows whether the scars on his back would dissuade a criminal from risking another crime, but it is hard to imagine that corporal measures could stimulate a higher rate of recidivism than already exists. Islamic forms of punishment do not serve the favorite new right goal of simply isolating criminals from the rest of society, but they may achieve the same purpose of making further crimes impossible. In the movie *Bonnie and Clyde*, Warren Beatty successfully robs a bank with his arm in a sling, but this must be dismissed as artistic license. It must be extraordinarily difficult, at the very least, to perform much violent crime with only one hand.

Do these medieval forms of punishment rehabilitate the criminal? Plainly not. But long prison terms do not rehabilitate either. And it is just as plain that typical Islamic punishments are no crueler to the convict than incarceration in the typical American state prison.

Of course there are other reasons besides its bizarre forms of punishment that the Islamic system of justice seems uncivilized to the Western mind. One is the absence of due process. Another is the long list of offenses—such as drinking, adultery, blasphemy, "profiteering," and so on—that can bring on conviction and punishment. A third is all the ritualistic mumbo-jumbo in pronouncements of Islamic law (like that talk about puberty and amnesia in the ayatollah's quotation at the beginning of this article). Even in these matters, however, a little cultural modesty is called for. The vast majority of American criminals are convicted and sentenced as a result of plea bargaining, in which due process plays almost no role. It has been only half a century since a wave of religious fundamentalism stirred this country to outlaw the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Most states also still have laws imposing austere constraints on sexual conduct. Only two weeks ago the *Washington Post* reported that the FBI had spent two and a half years and untold amounts of money to break up a nationwide pornography ring. Flogging the clients of prostitutes, as the Pakistanis did, does seem silly. But only a few months ago Mayor Koch of New York was proposing that clients caught in his own city have their names broadcast by radio stations. We are not so far advanced on such matters as we often like to think. Finally, my lawyer friends assure me that the rules of jurisdiction for American courts contain plenty of petty requirements and bizarre distinctions that would sound silly enough to foreign ears.

Perhaps it sounds barbaric to talk of flogging and amputation, and perhaps it is. But our system of punishment also is barbaric, and probably more so. Only cultural smugness about their system and willful ignorance about our own make it easy to regard the one as cruel and the other as civilized. We inflict our cruelties away from public view, while nations like Pakistan stage them in front of 10,000 onlookers. Their outrages are visible; ours are not. Most Americans can live their lives for years without having their peace of mind disturbed by the knowledge of what goes on in our prisons. To choose imprisonment over flogging and amputation is not to choose human kindness over cruelty, but merely to prefer that our cruelties be kept out of sight, and out of mind.

Public flogging and amputation may be more barbaric forms of punishment than imprisonment, even if they are not more cruel. Society may pay a higher price for them, even if the particular criminal does not. Revulsion against officially sanctioned violence and infliction of pain derives from something deeply ingrained in the Western conscience, and clearly it is something admirable. Grotesque displays of the sort that occur in Islamic countries probably breed a greater tolerance for physical cruelty, for example, which prisons do not do precisely because they conceal their cruelties. In fact it is our admirable intolerance for calculated violence that makes it necessary for us to conceal what we have not been able to do away with. In a way this is a good thing, since it holds out the hope that we may eventually find a way to do away with it. But in another way it is a bad thing, since it permits us to congratulate ourselves on our civilized humanitarianism while violating its norms in this one area of our national life.



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# Books and the Arts

## Stanley Kauffmann on films

### Notes on Handke's Film

"The soundtrack invented silence," said Robert Bresson. It's proved yet again in Peter Handke's *The Left-Handed Woman*, which he directed in 1977. The woman's silence is a chief component and must be audible. She isn't mute like Elisabet in *Persona*: she is just quiet most of the time. Her quiet affects the voices of those who speak to her, except her child, the person to whom she responds most readily and warmly. Her quiet affects the sound of the railroad trains below her house.

Handke's novel of that name was published before the film was made—in the US, Farrar, Straus & Giroux did it in 1978 after its complete appearance in one issue of the *New Yorker*—but Handke said recently that he conceived the work as a screenplay and wrote it first as such. Subsequently, with apposite changes, he made it into narrative before filming started.

An exceptional sequence. How many serious writers think of material in film terms? Most screen writing is done for hire, by writers of more or less talent who adapt someone else's play or novel or develop someone else's idea. The amount of serious writing done originally and impulsively for the screen, so far as it shows up there anyway, is minuscule.

The woman, unnamed, lives with her husband and eight-year-old son in a Paris suburb. All are German. The husband works in Paris and, at the beginning, comes back from a business trip to Finland. He is glad to be home with his wife, whom he loves more and more; takes her out for dinner that night; stays the night with her in a hotel above the restaurant so that they can be only with each other.

Going to the airport to meet him, she is enclosed in silence. We have seen her in it from the start, sitting at a window sewing while her son reads a school composition aloud. Her very first words are not spoken until the morning after the hotel, and they are "voice-over" on the soundtrack. The first words she actually addresses to her husband, after their night of marital reunion, are to tell him that she wants him to leave, to leave her alone.

In most of the film she is alone. Her child is with her, she moves about the neighborhood and encounters friends, her husband comes to visit her and the boy. But her being is solitary. She has gone into silence as to another place where she can be visited or telephoned but which is nevertheless away. She has gone to be by herself: to *be*, by herself.

No overt reason is given for her decision to ask her husband to leave, no quarrel, no cooling—on his part, quite the reverse. (This last causes his outbursts of anger when he visits later, which she understands and accepts.) Nor is it a modish quest for identity: she seems to know who she is. Nor is it a "retreat" from the world through aversion to it; presumably she has withdrawn in order to reconsider engagement. The world laps at her, like waves at a rock: a young woman with a baby whom she sees recurrently in the streets; an old couple sitting happily on a bench in their small garden; the games of her son and his chum. Contradictions abound: a man passes her on horseback, when she is out for a walk, riding along a ravine edge under which a passing train roars; her house is lovely in a grim neighborhood. (It's a house that Handke lived in for a while, in Clamart. The novel is set outside a German city, where Handke was living when he got the idea for the work, but the film is set outside Paris, where he was living when it was made.) There is no romance of old Paris here; it is old-and-ugliest-new Paris that surrounds her, puzzles, attracts, and freezes her.

What does she want? It would debase the film if she uttered a word about it. Still it seems clear that she doesn't want, will not get, change: in herself or anything else. The film goes through three months—March, April, and into May—by which time she gives a small party. What she has wanted, it seems, is the power, the orientation, *to go on exactly as before*. Margaret Fuller said, after some contemplation, "I accept the universe." When Thomas Carlyle heard this, he said, "Gad, she'd better." For Handke's woman, her three months of inner solitude serve as her simple but necessary Carlyle.

The tension in the film—not suspense, of which there is none, but surface tension like the top of a too-full glass—comes from several strong elements. First, there is Handke's understanding of the people, what the actors must concentrate on, what they must omit. Then there is his eye, wonderful, wonderfully aided by Robby Müller, the cinematographer of Wim Wenders's films. (Wenders was the producer of this film.)

Handke, with Müller's help, frequently uses lighting that suggests Vermeer: the window on the world, the window *as* the world, affording light that touches the interior gently. This Vermeer-like lighting works in two ways: a tension

### Films Worth Seeing

*Angi Vera*. A small-scale, large-truth drama of political corruption, delicately done. Hungary, 1948.

*Kramer vs. Kramer*. New York today. Custody fight by a divorced couple. Thin, somewhat romanticized script beefed up by excellent acting.

*My Brilliant Career*. Beginning two possibly brilliant careers—the star's (Judy Davis) and the director's (Gillian Armstrong). Australia, 1890s. Spunk, color, unforced charm.

*Our Hitler: A Film from Germany*. Special engagements. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's seven-hour collection of nightmares, fantasies, scourgings, and projections. Occasionally sluggish, sometimes infuriating, generally overwhelming.

**SK**



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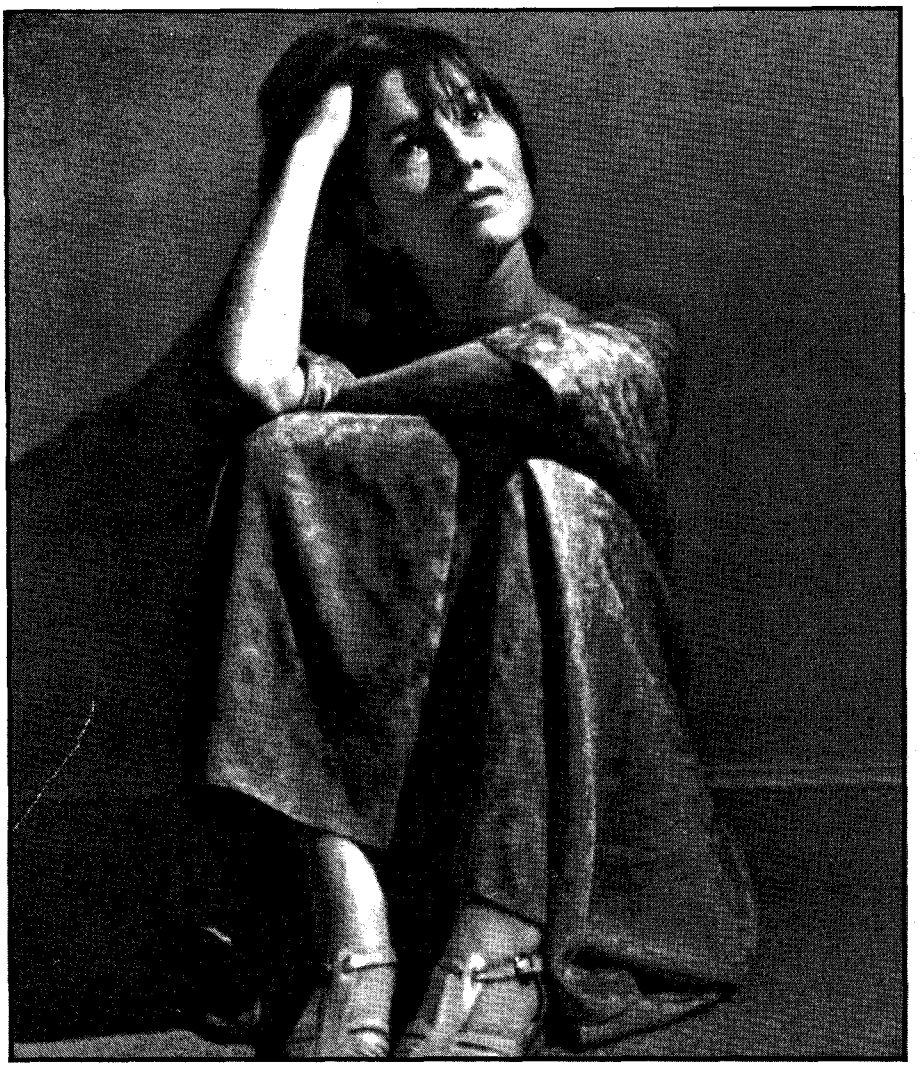

Edith Clever in *The Left-Handed Woman*

between Out There and In Here; and a tension between this classicism of light and the heterodox drama of the whole.

Also, Handke electrifies space, physical space, with charges from the innermost beings of people in that space. His model in this is the Japanese master Ozu, as Handke tells us explicitly. At one point the woman is watching, on TV, a Japanese film in which a withdrawn wife is coerced into a family game by her scowling husband, who smiles after she complies. I assume that this is an Ozu film since Ozu's photograph is on the wall of this Paris house.

And there's a reminder of another master who reveres Ozu—Antonioni. A publisher who comes to give the woman an assignment (she translates from French into German) is played by the Swiss actor/director Bernhard Wicki. Anyone who knows *La Notte* will recognize Wicki as the writer who dies early in that film; and Wicki, to my knowledge, has not been in a film since then. Handke must have been aware of this suggestion of Antonioni.

Many of Handke's references in the film are just as obvious as the Ozu photograph, obviously intended to be so. The woman lives on rue de la Raison, near the corner of rue Pascal. When she walks down the rue Elise, we hear a piano playing Beethoven's *Für Elise*. The publisher wants the woman to re-translate that tale of acceptances, Flaubert's *A Simple Heart*. This isn't symbolism on Handke's part, it's humor about symbolism. So much bombards us every day that bits here and there are bound to be emblematic, just as, because we dream every night, an occasional dream is bound to be prophetic.

Patterns, non-symbolic, concern Handke more. For instance, there's an early view of the city seen through a lateral aperture. Later, the woman walks at dusk past a shop just as its white shutter is coming down. The second parallelogram reinforces the first. Handke uses Paris as unsentimentally and pithily as Godard did in *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*.

But the strongest element is Edith Clever. Finally and fundamentally, she is the film. Handke shows a gift for direction that makes the head spin after our experience of his other gifts. Bruno Ganz, as the husband, is his customary *sérieux* self. Bernhard Minetti, a famous old actor of the Schiller Theater in Berlin, lays in endearing colors as the woman's father who comes for a brief visit. All these are fine, but the film is or is not the woman, and the woman is: is Edith Clever.

She is the leading actress of the Theater am Halleschen Ufer in Berlin, reputedly the best theater in Europe, and was first seen widely as the Marquise of O. in Eric Rohmer's superb film (*TNR*, November 6, 1976). A power that was present in her as the marquise now flowers as Handke's woman, the power of inner suggestion: the conviction that what we see and hear of her are the phenomena of a private cosmos, a cosmos like that in each of us which, as Wittgenstein spent some time in reminding us, is ultimately doomed to isolation. The conviction of that inner cosmos is virtually the whole of *The Left-Handed Woman*. (The title has no literal application. It merely indicates some difference from the usual, without really rare anomaly. I take that to be Handke's point. She is not like everyone; nevertheless, we know there are many like her.)

Nothing that Clever says or does in this film is of first importance. What is important is that unheard, unseen self. Without a conviction in us of that self, the woman would be only a neurotic or a poser. The question never arises.

Recently I saw *The Wrong Move* (1975), directed by Wenders with a script by Handke freely adapted from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, made contemporary. The structure and harmonics resemble *The Left-Handed Woman*, but the film is much less successful than Handke's own. The behavior of most of

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the characters is capriciously elliptical, in a post-modernist way, rather than implicative, and the leading actor, Rüdiger Vogler, who is often Wenders's leading actor, is inadequate. (Vogler has a lesser role in *The Left-Handed Woman* as an unemployed actor who is attracted to Clever.) He does not convey the inner world. He is merely a man who is taciturn, even affectless, neither a hero nor an anti-hero, a non-hero. Without our certainty of his secrets, he becomes something of a contemporary cliché.

No danger of that with Clever. The woman in this film is alive—remote, listening, waiting, even (as we later infer) faintly hoping—alive. The time that the picture covers is the time that it takes her to rearrange the world around her like a garment that must be made to fit. The picture closes with a line from a poem by Vlado Kristl: "Have you noticed there's only room for those who make room for themselves?"

Another quotation. Handke wrote some years ago:

> The progress of literature seems to me to consist of the gradual removal of unnecessary fictions. More and more vehicles fall by the wayside, the story becomes superfluous, invention becomes superfluous, what matters more is the communication of experiences, linguistic and non-linguistic ones, and for that it is no longer necessary to invent stories.

By this credo, he has written some of the best novels and plays of our time. In this first film that he has directed, the risk is, paradoxically, less. The film of *The Left-Handed Woman* is more crystallized than the novel. Not because I learned after I saw it that it was first conceived in screen idiom. Before I knew that, it was clear that Clever and Müller, under Handke's guidance, were realizing what was more distantly admirable in the prose. They were communicating more immediately the "non-linguistic" experience.

Other preeminent writers have directed films, notably Cocteau and Malraux. Now Handke. He is becoming one of the relatively few artistic forces who make this a time in which it's interesting, culturally, to live.

# Robert Brustein on theater

## Self-Parody and Self-Murder

Whenever I review a play by Edward Albee, I worry about the distribution of his royalties. He has such a perfect gift for theatrical mimicry that I begin to imagine August Strindberg, Eugene O'Neill, and T. S. Eliot rising from their graves to demand for their estates a proper share of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Tiny Alice*, and *A Delicate Balance*. Even living authors like Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, and Harold Pinter might be contemplating a case against Albee, not so much for expropriating their plots and characters as for borrowing their styles. In his latest play, *The Lady From Dubuque* (Morosco), the playwright has gone to an unusual source—namely himself. I can see a lawsuit coming—Albee v. Albee—where the younger accuses the older writer of plagiarism, perhaps even alienation of affection and breach of promise.

Albee certainly has breached his promise in his last 11 plays, not excepting *The Lady From Dubuque*. It is really quite an awful piece, drenched with those portentous religious-philosophical discharges about death and truth and illusion that have been swamping his work ever since he got the preposterous idea in his head that he was some kind of (prematurely ancient) prophet and metaphysician of our disorders. I felt acutely embarrassed for actors charged with saying things like "Everything is true . . . therefore nothing is true . . . therefore everything is true." If *that* is true, then they ought to stop talking altogether. Unfortunately, they don't. And the characters they are given to play are not much improvement on their dialogue.

Collected together in a living room that looks more like the first-class lounge on the SS *United States* are three mismatched couples who spend the opening minutes of this two-hour evening bitching at each other, when they are not looking around (everywhere but under the upholstered sofa) for their lost identities. One woman is a natural blonde who has dyed her hair brunette because she looked cheap as a blonde; her boyfriend is a sadistic redneck "floosie bopper" who seems to hate black people. The other two couples, equally well delineated, are your average run-of-the-mill Albee scorpions, and while they are depositing some diluted venom into each other's necks, the heroine (who is dying of cancer) curls up every so often in a question mark of pain and screams.

Into this ménage, accompanied by an ironic, educated black man—and just in time for a momentous first-act curtain—comes the Lady from Dubuque, tricked out in a stunning outfit by Pauline Trigère. In the second act, she claims to be the dying heroine's mother. But since she is the only character on stage to speak in simple declarative sentences ("This is Oscar. Oscar is black"), and since Oscar walks and talks like a Symbol, we realize quickly enough that she's the Angel of Death, and the black man is her Messenger. Irene Worth is one of the few actresses in the world capable of playing this kind of character without making you gag, or herself blush. Unfortunately, she played the same character, accompanied by the same black man, in *Toys in the Attic*—which makes Lillian Hellman another potential Albee litigant.

Still, Albee faking Albee is better than Albee faking Eliot, if you're measuring degrees of fakery. I found enough faint echoes of the old ripper in the play to keep my eyelids from closing—as they did (before the dying hero's) in *All Over*, and Albee's other boring discourses on mortality. Every so often, a little wave of energy courses through the dead electrical circuits of the work, as when a character says, "My cup runneth over," and another replies, "Right, but watch the rug." A little more of this stuff, and I might have snapped awake entirely, but Albee's heart is no more in the bickering of his couples than in the suffering of his heroine. Perhaps the ghastly reception and quick closing of this play will get him angry enough to give up the metaphysical gush and get back to his proper work—cutting the jugulars of his unfortunate American contemporaries.

The best new play I've seen so far this season, and one of the best productions, is a 50-year-old Soviet comedy called *The Suicide* by Nikolai Erdman, as staged by the Trinity Square Repertory Theater in Providence, Rhode Island. If the thought of spending a day in a Providence theater makes you shudder, you can begin to appreciate the indefatigible gallantry of this company, which has been perform-



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ing in that city for over a decade and a half, often to a hostile reception by a provincial citizenry. Perhaps the theater, and its gifted leader, Adrian Hall, are sustained by a sense of history. Its production of *The Suicide* is clearly an historic event—the American premiere of a Russian comedy which has yet to be seen inside the Soviet Union.

*The Suicide* was Erdman's second play, written for the Moscow Art Theater in 1929. Before he produced it, Stanislavsky thought it wise to test the political waters; he sent a copy to Stalin. Stalin replied that "I do not have a very high opinion of this play" and "my closest comrades consider it empty and even harmful." Despite this penetrating aesthetic judgment, Stalin refrained from banning *The Suicide* until the night of its final dress rehearsal, after which Erdman was sent into exile in Siberia, and never wrote another word. I believe the lynx-eyed Georgian may have deprived us of another major writer. *The Suicide* has a few flaws, but it is in that great tradition of farcical Russian playwriting that began with Griboyedov, flowered in Gogol, and culminated in Chekhov. Maxim Gorki, who was Stalin's favorite dramatist (as well as the current favorite of British and American resident companies), looks, beside Erdman, like a grey, exacting Soviet Realist, for, by contrast with his literal-minded contemporary, Erdman has wit, flamboyance, and a slashing style.

*The Suicide* revolves around Semyon Semyonovich, an unemployed laborer, who awakes one morning with a ferocious craving for liverwurst. His unsatisfied appetite leads him to conclude that existence is meaningless and suicide inevitable. Once his neighbors are unable to convince him that "life is beautiful" (announced to the accompaniment of gypsy music and posters of muscular Soviet athletes), they urge him to shoot himself "as a member of society." Each tries to use Semyon's death as a vindication of his own way of life—an intellectual as a blow for the intelligentsia, a composer as a salute to art, a romantic woman as a tribute to unrequited love, and so forth. As for Semyon, the more prepared he is for death, the more he loses his resolve, until he finally arrives two hours late for his own suicide, quaking all over: "I'm going to burst, I'm going to explode, I'm going to die of a heart attack. If I die of a heart attack, I can't shoot myself." Lying swathed in a black shroud, he pretends to be dead, while his neighbors eulogize over his inert body, each offering a different reason why he died ("because of the liverwurst," whispers his mother-in-law). Unable to bear it any longer, Semyon pulls himself from his coffin by yanking on the tie of the terrified intellectual, throwing the neighbors into consternation by declaring his newly-found passion for life: "I want to eat—but more than eating, I want to live. . . . I love my stomach, my arms and legs, these dear little feet of mine." By this time, however, everybody wants to kill him—and the play ends tragically, not with Semyon's death, but with the accidental shooting of a deaf-and-dumb child.

The play vibrates with a bold theatricality which borders on surrealism, a style caught almost perfectly in the decor and performance. Jonas Jurasas, a Lithuanian director who is himself a victim of Soviet repressiveness, has staged the action like Meyerhold directing Gogol; the evening has the manic quality of a farcical nightmare. In one key scene, Semyon decides to brave existence by learning a new profession—music. As he and his wife wrestle on the bed with a huge unmanageable tuba, he eventually discovers from the instruction book that he won't be able to master the instrument until he can play all the notes—on a piano. Instead, he buys a revolver.

In keeping with the style of the play, Robert D. Soule has designed a set with a sense of humor. Doors pivot on hinges or turn into writing tables; icons open up to reveal human faces; a shooting gallery revolves, bearing the various faces of Semyon in various moods. Through the window can be glimpsed a crude cutout of the Kremlin, a source of the comic despair that pervades the play. At one point, Semyon calls the Kremlin authorities to tell them "I have read Marx and I don't like Marx." And by the end, he has condemned the entire structure of Soviet society. "I'm dying, and who's guilty?" he asks, "the leaders are guilty. . . . I want to ask the revolution, what do you want? . . . Allow us to say it's hard to live. . . . Give us the right to whisper." With this existential dissent from purely political solutions, Erdman declares his independence. One can see why Stalin and his "closest comrades" despised and feared this work.

German Romanticism lives.

# Syberberg's Hitler

## by Leon Wieseltier

*Very evil people cannot really be imagined dying.*—Adorno

There is a sentiment about Hitler, a suppurating sense of defilement, which those still in the grip of old Europe cannot elude. Before Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's astonishing *Hitler, a Film from Germany* (reviewed by Stanley Kauffmann: "Dreaming of Hitler," *TNR*, February 2, 1980) I had recognized this sentiment in art only once, in Krzystof Penderecki's *Dies Irae (Auschwitz Oratorio)*. Penderecki's lamentation is music's great reckoning with this evil; the orchestra and chorus sound maddened by grief; they are almost unbearable to hear. The work begins in blackness, on a single very low note chanted with a kind of funereal fury by the men and the cellos. The note deepens like a pit. And into this pit there falls the lost voice of a woman, a spectral soprano voice which intones: "corpora parvolorum," bodies of children, and then bodies of boys, bodies of girls, bodies from camps, bodies with wounds. . . . The threnody is suddenly followed by a seizure, a second movement called "Apocalypsis," which is a wild swirling account of the end of days. The composer's cacophonous wrath is terrible. But the struggle ends in triumph. The chorus brings tidings of "a new sky and a new earth." The tenor exults, with Corinthians: "Death is swallowed up in victory!" There is an epiphany at Auschwitz (where the work was first performed in 1967); Auschwitz is bested, faith won.

And then it happens. A late rustling in the hopeful final measures, barely more than an echo, but it happens: the male chorus whispers "corpora parvolorum." These are the last words. But they are



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## A WINTER WITHOUT SNOW

Even the sky here in Connecticut has it,
That wry look of accomplished conspiracy,
The look of those who've gotten away

With a petty but regular white collar crime.
When I pick up my shirts at the laundry,
A black woman, putting down her *Daily News*,

Wonders why and how much longer our luck
Will hold. "Months now and no kiss of the witch."
The whole state overcast with such particulars.

For Emerson, a century ago and farther north,
Where the country has an ode's jagged edges,
It was "frolic architecture." Frozen blue-

Print of extravagance, shapes of a shared life
Left knee-deep in transcendental drifts:
The isolate forms of snow are its hardest fact.

Down here, we've come to prefer the raw material
Of everyday, and this year have kept an eye
On it, shriveling but still recognizable—

A sight that disappoints even as it adds
A clearing second guess to winter. It's
As if, in the third year of a "relocation"

To a promising notch way out on the sunbelt,
You've grown used to the pre-fab housing,
The quick turnover in neighbors, the constant

Smell of factory smoke—like Plato's cave,
You sometimes think—and the stumpy trees
That summer slighted and winter just ignores,

And all the snow that never falls is now
Back home and mixed up with other piercing
Memories of childhood days you were kept in

With a Negro schoolmate, of later storms
Through which you drove and drove for hours
Without ever seeing where you were going.

Or as if you've cheated on a cold sickly wife.
Not in some overheated turnpike motel room
With an old flame, herself the mother of two,

Who looks steamy in summer-weight slacks
And a parrot-green pullover. Not her.
Not anyone. But every day after lunch

You go off by yourself, deep in a brown study
Not doing much of anything for an hour or two,
Just staring out the window, or at a patch

On the wall where a picture had hung for ages,
A woman with planets in her hair, the gravity
Of perfection in her features—oh! her hair

The lengthening shadow of the galaxy's sweep.
As a young man you used to stand outside
On warm nights and watch her through the trees.

You remember how she disappeared in winter
Obscured by snow that fell blindly on the heart,
On the house, on a world of possibilities.

**J. D. McClatchy**

enough to take back the grace. It is the despair, then, that is final. The faith won is marred; something has been forever spoiled; there is a permanent stain on the soul.

The envoi of Syberberg's film, its fourth part, is entitled *We, Children of Hell*. At one point André Heller (a well-known Austrian poet) steps out into the studio, now abandoned, strewn with leaves, left to the symbols with which Syberberg has created the work—the ashtree from *Die Walküre*, the rhombohedron from Dürer's *Melancholia*, the ringmaster's outsized megaphone, the reproduction of Edison's Black Maria. Heller walks pensively across this chilly landscape of meanings toward a table upon which is perched a puppet of Hitler. He sits to the left of the inert Führer; he has come to tell him "the story of the death of light." Accompanied by the adagio from Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet—the melody of "Deutschland über alles," sounding now like an elegy—the weary man turns to the puppet and makes his complaint.

> Let me talk about lost life. . . . You destroyed Berlin, Vienna. . . . You are responsible for houses without souls, with burned-out eyes, without tears, cities that cannot weep. Auto landscapes without silence, life that no longer quivers. You took away our sunsets. . . . You are to blame that we can no longer look at a field of grain without thinking of you. . . . You occupied everything and corrupted it with your deeds, everything—honor, loyalty, country life, hard work, movies, dignity, fatherland, pride, faith. You are the executioner of Western civilization . . . the plague of our century. . . . We are snuffed out. Nothing more will grow here. . . . Congratulations!

The actor's address to the puppet is heartbreaking. This is the sentiment: that the horrors Hitler introduced into Europe robbed it forever of its old joy, of the happiness it could have just because such horrors had never been. Hitler damned all who followed, he damaged the world irreversibly. Syberberg describes a wound that cannot be healed. The hymn—Haydn's, Hitler's—sings innocence to its rest.

Hitler won because he existed.

This is the film of a poet who is still crawling from the wreckage.

* * *

*Hitler, a Film from Germany* is extravagantly eclectic; it is a vast ruminative juxtaposition of references, drawn from a breathtaking array of literary, visual, musical, and cinematic sources. The film's few ideas and many ironies are produced out of this learned, unlikely combustion of images. But Syberberg's



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thick eclecticism must not obscure the loyalties upon which his work rests. The film is a manifesto of its maker's beliefs, which are fiercely held and, in certain crucial matters, courageously unsophisticated. Syberberg's epic film reopens a particular tradition of metaphysics and culture that was supposed to have ended with Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*. It is a defiant work of German Romanticism, perhaps the greatest Wagnerian spectacle since Wagner—and about Hitler! Of course Syberberg is tragically aware of Wagner's cost, of the atrocities that issued in part from his spell. He does not wish to exonerate Wagner: he knows that Hitler did not take Wagner's name entirely in vain. Yet there was a perversion, and Syberberg's objective is to defend Wagner against it, to defend Wagner against Hitler. This he does by arguing that to understand Hitler it takes a soul like Wagner's, that only the Wagnerian soteriology may account for the scale of Hitler's success, and for his failure—that Wagner is finally bigger than Hitler, the way truth is bigger than half-lies.

Wagner's art, of course, requires no defense. Auschwitz could not make the music ugly, it could only make its beauty cruel. (What must be said, for example, about Ezra Pound is not merely that he was a monstrous anti-Semite, but that his verse was not beautiful enough to make you forget it.) But it is not Wagner's art that Syberberg seeks, at this late date, to secure; it is Wagner's spiritual style. More specifically, it is the legitimacy, even after Hitler, of the longing for last things.

Much has been made of Syberberg's claim that Hitler is "in us," but this must not be mistaken for psychology or sociology. Syberberg is serenely indifferent to that kind of fact. He is interested in the fact of the spirit, in *Geist*, and that is what is "in us": a spirit craving to be redeemed. This craving he proudly acknowledges in himself, in his medium, in his nation. He makes no apologies for his—and Germany's—impatience with the inconclusive. He wishes history to end, which it cannot do without catastrophe.

The Third Reich, according to Syberberg, was precisely an experiment in redemption. It was not a political event only, determined by electoral arithmetic and the productivity of the steel industry in the Ruhr. It was rather an event in the history of the spirit, the appointed conclusion of the salvationist logic in Romantic culture. For centuries Germany awaited Parsifal and Parsifal appeared. Syberberg's analysis of nazism appears not all that different from nazism's own. He agrees that at stake was the fate of the universe.

There is much rage in Syberberg's film, and much sorrow, but its controlling emotion is disappointment, and that is its scandal. Syberberg's problem is not that Hitler promised the end of days. His problem is that Hitler failed to deliver.

Syberberg's Hitler, in short, is a false messiah. False, but a messiah. This brazenly eschatological interpretation will be construed by many to be an apology for Hitler, when in fact it is an apology for eschatology. Syberberg is determined to show that Parsifal survived Hitler's impersonation.

And how could Parsifal have been refused? Perhaps that is the real difference between Germans and Jews: the Jews have always refused. The people who invented the messiah have never quite accepted one. It is strange that those so mistreated by history should be so reluctant to abolish it. But Germany's modern messiah deceived. Why did Hitler fail? Syberberg does not say, though the failure was undoubtedly Hitler's own; the little man proved unworthy of the Grail. Syberberg also does not say that Hitler failed because he burned the Jews. There is no reason that he should: apocalypse has always been a bloody business. Which is not to imply that Syberberg condones the crime. He does not; but then he doesn't have to, because Hitler lost. But Hitler might have won, and made good on Germany's dreams. What then—would the Jews have been a price worth paying? Would Syberberg have renounced redemption so that the Jews could live?

* * *

Syberberg and history.

Syberberg believes that Hitler was the decisive figure of the 20th century, the father of all the abominations of the age. He was, but only for the Germans and the Jews. The rest of the world swiftly recovered. That is because the course of contemporary history was in fact not being fashioned in the Reich-Chancellery. Nietzsche—whose absence from Syberberg's thinking is no surprise—saw in the last century that the next would belong to America and Russia, and so it has, at least thus far; Hitler was probably Europe's last world-historical figure. Hitler, moreover, was not responsible for advanced capitalism and its consumer society, as Syberberg contends; all that was already in place when Hitler arrived, and in no small measure abetted his rise to power. Nor was Hitler's revolution in Berlin nearly as momentous for modern political life as Lenin's revolution in Petrograd. As for Israel, which Syberberg also lists among Hitler's achievements (this one approvingly): the Final Solution speeded things up, but it was not Israel's reason for being, and the structure of the state was already formed. The Jews owe it only to themselves.

Syberberg and politics.

"Democracy and the Grail . . . impossible." Thus one of Syberberg's actors, and quite rightly. Syberberg's film expresses a fundamental certitude about politics which places him in the company of Solzhenitsyn and Khomeini, the great chiliasts of the epoch. What he shares with them is the conviction that political systems must provide for the spiritual needs of their members. And that is exactly what liberalism since Spinoza has denied. It may be that liberalism's adversaries—such as Syberberg—are more correct about the appeal of religion, and its inalienability from politics; people will not willingly expel from their community what they

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still believe to be most high and true. And there is surely a sense in which liberalism asks people to stop dreaming. (More correctly: it asks that dreams of communion be exchanged for dreams of success. Hitler, of course, dreamed both dreams.)

Liberal society has too often in this century betrayed a failure of secularist will. It did not withstand Hitler's diabolical seductions. It flirted long with communism's offer of deliverance. It has not yet adequately distinguished between Solzhenitsyn's courage and his doctrine. It hunts for its own virtues in Islam. Intellectuals in the West do not appear to appreciate sufficiently the political blandishments of secularism. They know, but they do not always believe, that all saviors are tyrants.

Syberberg's masterpiece—which must be seen more than once to be seen at all—is imbued with a profound malice toward materialism, the old great foe of the spirit. But Syberberg's savagery is mostly reserved for the prosperous Federal Republic. The catastrophe for Germany, according to the lovesick Syberberg, was that it concluded from its own ruin that its traditional manner of political aspiration must finally be abjured. Not Hitler, but Hitler's defeat, cost Germany its soul. Syberberg sets out to persuade his fellow Germans—the "our" in "our Hitler"—that Hitler's rout is no reason to start believing in money. His deeply lyrical film attempts to establish, with its own visual and intellectual power, that not even Hitler discredited the grandiose Germany. Like many German intellectuals of the past, Susan Sontag has written, "Syberberg treats his Germanness as a moral vocation." His utter lack of irony in this connection is shocking.

The objection to Syberberg's mysticism could be put this way: that it offers no basis from which Hitler could have been resisted in his time. (This, at least, cannot be said of Fassbinder, his nemesis on the left.) The view that Hitler was inevitable, that what engendered him was destiny, is essentially a dismissal of politics. Why resist salvation? Messiahs batten on this selfish desire to believe. Only events can furnish their proof; and, as someone in the film remarks, airplanes, not reason, undid Hitler.

Syberberg often rehearses the steely Nazi injunction that to bring history to its climax much sacrifice will be necessary. But whose sacrifice? In Germany it was usually the sacrifice of others. Not the believers, but the unbelievers bore the burden. About their misery—specifically about the terror against Germany's own dissidents and undesirables, about political abuses short of the gas chambers—Syberberg tells little. Hitler was, presumably, another holy sinner.

* * *

World War II taught Germany at last to do what it never really could: to think against itself. It does not matter that its teachers were Eisenhower and Zhukov; a new critical sobriety was there. Germany seemed finally detached from its millennial fantasies, awakened to the danger in its myths. It began to see to its problems, and not to its fate; to rely upon its intelligence, and not upon its soul. Syberberg is right—the Federal Republic has diminished Germany. It has buried the ancient German imagination and that is its strength. Would Syberberg turn all this back? Would he replace the terrible shudder with the original thrill? Does he want Germans to yearn again for gods who destroy and die? For there are, in the end, no other kinds of gods.

Syberberg is also right that much about postwar German society is plastic and heartless. But this need not require the Romantic recidivism he appears to prescribe. There was another Germany which may be recovered, a Germany no less exercised by the spirit than Wagner, but much less captivated by doom. There was Kant and Mozart and Goethe; and of course Nietzsche, modern Germany's best self, who first diagnosed the German fever and fought it bitterly.

Example of a healthy proposition about Germany: that the *Berufsverbot* is more of a threat to the nation than its indifference to greatness. (The *Berufsverbot* is an examination made by the West German government of the political histories of all applicants for civil service jobs.) It is no insult to a man's soul to worry about his rights and his income.

For some of the consequences of its devotion to the spirit, Syberberg's visionary film must be viewed with alarm; but for having dared its viewers to stop pretending that the spirit no longer matters the film must be viewed with gratitude. Syberberg's mighty reveries are a challenge that cannot be ignored.

## Maugham
## by Ted Morgan
(Simon & Schuster; $16.95)

One bizarre feature of contemporary literary life is the assumption of famous authors that they have a right to posthumous privacy. After years of showing off by affixing their real names to books, after decades of courting the public by advertising and blurbs and photographs, after lifetimes spent totting up the totals of copies sold, just before they die they command the world to treat them as sensitive plants again. They then enjoin their acquaintances to burn their letters, withhold intimate anecdotes, and frustrate biographers. This lust to control future intellectual and artistic history in absentia by a final exercise of the senile will is scandalous, outrageous, and I think uniquely "modern."

An author who's spent his life soliciting notice by offering the public images and formulations he could easily keep to himself may have some legal right to final privacy. But he has no moral right, and that's as true of gents like T. S. Eliot and half-gents like W. H. Auden as of cads like W. Somerset Maugham, whose pride in being identifed as a well-known best seller while alive was equaled only by his desire to take it all back again and regain privacy and innocence when dead. "He wanted to have his cake and eat it," Frieda Lawrence once said of him.

"I direct," Maugham wrote in his will, "I direct that there shall be no biography." With the complicity of Maugham's literary executor, the late Spencer Curtis Brown, Ted Morgan has ignored that preposterous injunction and written Maugham's life in 736 leaden pages. "The whole story," S. N. Behrman said while Willie was alive, "is appalling and pitiful." Maugham was born in the reign of Victoria and survived into the reign of Elizabeth II, the only woman he ever really liked, her money and social position sufficing to overcome his programmatic misogyny. He was born at the British Embassy in



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Paris, where his father, a lawyer, handled the embassy's legal affairs. His mother died when he was eight; his father, when he was 10. Like poor club-footed Philip Carey in *Of Human Bondage*, he was bundled off to lodge with a horrible clergyman in England for seven years. He was miserable at school, and like so many of his contemporaries—Arnold Bennett, Churchill, George VI—he became a stammerer. He enjoyed his first homosexual experience in Heidelberg with an older British aesthete, and at the age of 18 found himself a medical student in London. "I became a medical student," he said, "because I could not announce to my guardian that I wished to be a writer." He was already writing naughty plays like Ibsen's and short stories like de Maupassant's and experimenting sexually with the odd prostitute, one of whom clapped him. By now he knew he was homosexual, but when he was 21 Wilde was imprisoned, and ever after, Maugham remained firmly in the closet, disguising his desires with publicized heterosexual affairs and finally with marriage and parenthood. He became skilled in duplicity and, as he looked out on the world, saw it with the eye of a cynic. Of course he was a first-rate bridge player and frequenter of the Great. In his early middle age he was an immensely popular playwright and once had four plays running simultaneously in the West End, plays largely about marriage which took him only three or four weeks to manufacture. He was now Making It, hobnobbing with Churchill and Billie Burke and Edmund Gosse and Hugh Walpole. He lived in Mayfair and got into the Garrick Club.

In 1914, he was 40, too old for active service, but like everyone else he was intensely patriotic, and he joined an ambulance unit in France. There he fell for Gerald Haxton, a gregarious, alcoholic San Franciscan who signed on as Maugham's difficult, unfaithful secretary and lover until his death in 1944, when he was replaced by the more compliant Alan Searle, destined to become, as Glenway Wescott says, "the nanny of [Maugham's] second childhood." In 1915 he published his masterpiece, *Of Human Bondage*, which got off to a great start in this country when Dreiser celebrated it in the pages of *The New Republic*. It is still a very good novel. Its treatment of London poverty and squalor, its exposure of the cash nexus, and its obsession with the pathos of bad writing (and bad painting) earn it a place on a line running from Gissing to Orwell, those other distinguished students of the Down and Out.

In the latter days of World War I Maugham transferred from ambulance driving to intelligence collecting in Switzerland while Haxton, back in London, found himself indicted on a charge of "gross indecency." Although acquitted, he was pronounced an undesirable alien ("a dreadful fellow," a spokesman for the Home Office called him) and forbidden to enter the UK again. Hence Maugham's extensive travels and prolonged residence abroad.

Maugham at age 77 in 1951. Photo from book.

After the war, his need for a cover prompted him to marry Syrie Wellcome, the decorator who made her name by devising the all-white drawing-room. He had already impregnated her. For 12 years he was formally married to her until divorce ended his misery. The marriage was a convenient facade for him, but for Syrie there was a problem: she loved him. "Willie told me himself," Wescott remembers, "that her physical demands were intolerable, inexcusable." He spent as little time as possible in her company, fleeing abroad to join Haxton at every opportunity. He continued his spying career in Petrograd in 1917. His job was to channel British money to Kerensky to keep Russia in the war. At the same time plays and stories and novels were streaming from his morning workshop. In 1924, he received the ultimate accolade. A little book of his made it into what Forster calls the Queen's Doll Souse. Socially he was much in demand, with a penchant for similar slightly bogus climbers like Beverley Nichols and Chips Channon—and of course the hordes of un-idead, clever-shallow "attractive" young men.

After 11 novels, 20 plays, and three volumes of short stories, he was rich enough to buy the Villa Mauresque, on Cap Ferrat, where he lived to the end in an opulent, rigid, self-conscious high style, waited on by 13 servants. The villa was his San Simeon, and he behaved like the Hearst of literature. He became virtually a professional host with a need to exhibit his riches. He entertained the Windsors and such, chatting bitchily while the increasingly embittered Haxton mixed the cocktails. Maugham estimated that during one three-week period his staff put out 1160 individual meals, not counting breakfasts. He no sooner had himself rejuvenated in Switzerland by the injection of matter from lamb fetuses than World War II broke out. He spent it in the States, propagandizing for the British cause and living with the Nelson Doubledays in South Carolina while Haxton did clerical work for the OSS in Washington.

He was 71 when the war ended, and his life henceforward makes unhappy reading. Technology had preserved his person but could do nothing for his mind, and certainly not for his will. He grew to resemble one of Swift's never-dying Struldbrugs, snotty, rude,


Lionel Trilling
*Criticism and Politics*

WILLIAM M. CHACE

For fifty years Lionel Trilling was a major critical presence in America. "He believed passionately," wrote Irving Howe, "and taught a whole generation also to believe, in the power of literature—its power to transform, elevate, and damage." This first detailed study of Trilling's criticism and fiction examines his influence and his part in America's search for a sense of its cultural self. "A fine study, lucid and gracefully written, of one of the two or three critics of mid-century America that mattered the most."—*M. H. Abrams.*

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abusive, mad. Secretly furious at the contempt of critics, he avenged himself by numerous acts of bitterness and envy. He hankered after the Nobel Prize. If he couldn't have that he wanted the queen to give him the Order of Merit, like Hardy. Instead she gave it to J. B. Priestley, whose conventional sexuality made him less of an embarrassment. Maugham had to settle for Companion of Honor, as if he were an orchestra leader or professor. He hit 80 in 1954, watched by all morbid eyes. "Maugham growing old," says Morgan, "was an international spectacle. No one since Dorian Gray had called so much attention to the aging process." He had earned four million dollars by writing, but when a book of tributes to his genius was proposed for his 80th birthday, even his most loyal friends found excuses not to participate. By the end, at the age of 91, he was sobbing, muttering, shouting obscenities. He would invite old friends to dinner and then, in a setting of black ties and shiny silver, scream at them, "Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck you!" Once he defecated on the carpet to show them all. He hated Syrie most, and in 1962 attacked her viciously in a memoir that startled even his most tolerant friends.


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"Some evil spirit has entered his body," said Noel Coward. During lucid moments, he imputed the whole success-disaster of his life to his stammer, which obliged him to become a writer and a spy instead of a lawyer, doctor, or public servant. He had to operate behind the scenes, or, in public, appear to be what he was not. Short and ugly, he detested tall people. He was shifty and sometimes quite dishonest, "a facade person," as Morgan calls him, eminently "social" in the not very admirable sense, a money snob with a powerful will, physically brave, furtive, mean-minded, resentful of his homosexuality, incapable of love.

Deficient, as he was the first to confess, in imaginative power, in his writings he stayed close to the materials and forms of actual life—medical studentship, the predicament of lonely colonials, the behavior of Gauguin (*The Moon and Sixpence*) and Aleister Crowley (*The Magician*)—rather than the materials and forms of literature. Once when he wanted to acquire some exotic words to decorate his prose, he went off to scrutinize the gem collection in the British Museum instead of heading for the reading room and digging "jasper" and "jade" out of Shakespeare and Marlowe, Burton and Browne. He never cottoned to Eliot's and Pound's notion that literature feeds on literature rather than life, and without "material" from actuality, like scandalous "short stories" retailed by Malayan planters in their cups, he felt he had nothing to work with.

Or so he insisted, when accounting for his extensive travels in the East between the wars. His cordial welcomes at embassies we might attribute to his fame and his social pliability. But it's quite possible—even if Morgan doesn't think of looking into the question—that he was still working for British intelligence as an aging but loyal Ashenden. It's hard to believe that a man who's once worked successfully for The Firm is ever allowed wholly to resign, especially, perhaps, if his bosses know he's homosexual and the great public does not. (If Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt are types of the modern British agent, so is Willie.) He admitted resuming intelligence work during World War II in the USA, whence he secretly reported back on the attitudes and conduct of his fellow citizens. I think it possible that he worked at the job fairly steadily from 1917 on. If so, this might go some way toward extenuating his more inert and mechanical works (*The Painted Veil, The Narrow Corner*), which could be conceived as productions necessitated by his cover as "a writer."

Morgan's biography is critically unsophisticated, superficial, vulgar. The reader—the book is a Book-of-the-Month Club main selection for March—is assumed to know virtually nothing: he must be told that British troops called Ypres "Wipers" during the Great War. It's assumed that the reader is as ignorant as the author of Rabbi Wise ("a Rabbi Wise," Morgan writes) and needs instruction even about the identity of Berenson. Morgan proudly lets it slip in his preface that he spent three whole years on this book, a fact, one would think, more to be apologized for than bragged about. More time might have enabled him to discover that Cyril Connolly's *Horizon* was not being published in 1936 but had to wait until December 1939. For an author not to know that *Horizon* was strictly a wartime operation suggests his limits as an interpreter of modern British social phenomena, Maugham included. I'm not demanding that Morgan be a scholar, but even a journalist should be able to quote correctly, or, when he misquotes, at least improve the original. For example, the all-purpose card Evelyn Waugh sent out to bores and impertinent requesters of favors reads—as is easily ascertained— "Mr. Evelyn Waugh deeply regrets that he is unable to do what is so kindly proposed." Morgan renders it: "Mr. Evelyn Waugh greatly regrets that he cannot do what you so kindly suggest." *Greatly regrets*: Morgan's version is barely English, let alone Waugh, and his tin ear for Waugh's triumphantly haughty mock-polite final passive construction suggests his incapacity to deal with any practitioner of English prose, including even Willie.

I'm not demanding that Morgan be a critic either, but if you're going to talk about an author's writings you've got to do better than summarize plots and then quote the reviews *seriatim*, including little gems of stupidity and illiteracy from the *Portland Oregonian* and the *Detroit News*. But Morgan's book is not all bad. It contains lots of names and some juicy scandals, and the depositions about Willie which Morgan has solicited from Wescott are wonderfully bright, acute, and valuable. And there are some nice vignettes, like one of Robert Helpmann at a party at the Sitwells' country house. "Told that everyone would wear costumes . . . , he dressed up as Queen Alexandra, and made his entrance to find that none of the others had worn



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costumes." But such moments are too rare, as Morgan proceeds doggedly through his chronology, pausing now and then to deliver a little canned "psychology," a little unearned political or social history, a little irrelevant detail. The London hire-clothiers Moss Bros. are colloquially called Moss Bross, we are informed, and we are told that on the *Queen Mary* Maugham once occupied cabin number M.60. Morgan's idiom is the American cant of the late 1970s. His narrative pivots on words like "escalated," "prestigious," and "supportive," phrases like "male chauvinist," "radical chic," and "wheeler-dealer." These may do, alas, if applied to late-1970s American actuality, but they're incapable of getting at the essence of British social reality in the last half-century. Morgan's annotation is slapdash, and he is innocently credulous of his sources. He digresses and repeats. Properly edited, the book should be half as long as it is.

But if this biography is sadly defective as an intellectual and artistic performance, Morgan has at least performed a service by treating Maugham's final gesture "directing" that no biography be written with the disdain it deserves. Now let's have Eliot and Auden.

**Paul Fussell**

## Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War by Ronald Fraser

(Pantheon; $15.95, $7.95 paper)

Responsible biographers and historians awake more and more frequently with a nightmare about what will be the raw material available for their trade in years to come. What politician or civil servant in his right mind these days would set down on paper anything of interest, when he knows that his words in five years' time may well come under the public scrutiny of a congressional committee? Who writes letters anymore, or keeps diaries—with the possible exception of British Labour ministers, penning acres of not entirely reliable bitchery with an eye to eventual personal gain, when they would perhaps have been better engaged in attempting to govern the ungovernable British? The Gibbons and Commagers of the future may have to make do with telephone tappings—and oral history.

If, however, they are nourished by the efforts of oral historians half as good as Ronald Fraser, the prospects may not be totally bleak. *Blood of Spain* is a real *tour de force*. It is not an easy book to get into, because of the complexity of the background of the Spanish Civil War and Fraser's vast cast of interviewed survivors, but once you are in it, it is impossible to get out again. The whole panorama of those three terrible years that left such a legacy for Europe and the world is there, in macro- and microcosm. In a prologue that admirably sets the scene, Fraser stresses how he largely avoided selecting the top people. Thus the news that Franco's Moors had risen in July 1936 is seen through the eyes of a 13-year-old schoolboy near Algeciras, who asks "will they invade Spain like the Moors twelve centuries ago?" His tutor reassures him that "lessons would start again in a few days. Everything seemed to have returned to normal." For some, the war also ended on a similar note of unreality; says a refugee doctor, who escaped from Asturias in 1939, "There was a general feeling that defeat, exile, would last only three or four years. The full dimension of the war seemed to have escaped these optimists. . . ."

For both sides, after years of mounting disorder, poverty, and simmering hatreds, the war appears to have come as the kind of relief that a thunderstorm brings after a prolonged bout of sultry summer heat. "We all longed for the military to rise," a monarchist student told Ronald Fraser; "longed for the dictatorship to put an end to this chaos. Not that we thought the army would. . . ." There was a note of almost insouciant innocence about the early days; the first barricades in Barcelona were constructed from recently unloaded paper bails; leftists breaking into a gunshop had the integrity to burn all the banknotes found there; a Popular Front officer was seen leading his men armed with only a riding crop, while others in ignorance tucked their battle dress tops into their trousers like a shirt. "There was a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of determination, but little experience." The aims of the war often had an equal innocence about them; "I want a King who will drink from the wine skin with me," declared a Carlist *requeté* (militiaman); "a King must be like one of us villagers." On both sides, there were many who saw it as a kind of utopian crusade; "we offered not a bloody, destructive revolution, but a constructive one," says a Falangist farmer; "they were materialist revolutionaries, and we were spiritual ones. . . ."

Devout Catholic mothers attached crucifixes around the necks of sons departing for the battlefront, with the exhortation: "Don't stain your hands in blood if you can help it, don't steal, be good. . . !" Pious hopes, alas. With the inevitable progression of civil warfare, atrocity was to breed worse atrocity, repression to escalate into counter-repression, giving the conflict in Spain its peculiar dimension of savagery. At the beginning, the atrocities were largely the responsibility of the left; the majority of the 145 army officers in Madrid's Montaña barracks massacred; priests, nuns, and landowners—small-holding peasants as well as *latifundistas*—slaughtered indiscriminately in Andalusia and Catalonia. But Franco's executioners soon caught up with, and surpassed, the left. At Córdoba under the dreaded Queipo de Llano "the cell in the Falange headquarters where they brought the people was like a balloon which fills in the evening, and by the next morning was empty again." (Yet, typical of the paradoxes of the Spanish Civil War, Queipo, with his experiments in rice-growing and mass construction of workers' apartments, may have achieved more than the syndicalists of the left on the social front.)

As in the French Revolution, executions became public *fêtes*, with coffee and *churro* stalls set up for the occasion. Typical of the casualty ratios in the war was Baena in Andalusia where (in the summer of 1936), for 81 combat deaths 180 died in the repression by both sides. Not typical was Oviedo in the north, where besieged Nationalists, by no means sure of local support, carried out no political executions and no vendetta assassinations. Then Franco's relieving force arrived, and the killing began.

I am not, however, entirely convinced



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by Mr. Fraser's arguments that Franco's atrocities were "worse" simply because they were "more extensive in time, space, and breadth." It would be neither less nor more superficial to observe that it was the left that started the whole horrible ball rolling. What *was* worse was Franco's incapacity to forgive, or show compassion, and his keeping up the repression so long after the war was over. In his harsh treatment of the separatist Basques may well lie much of the cause for the problems of today. (One interesting sidelight incidentally thrown out by Fraser is the comparative humanitarianism of Mussolini's Fascists operating in Spain.)

The most valuable and enduring contribution of *Blood of Spain* lies in fact not in the accounts of the war itself but in Fraser's picture of the "revolution in the revolution" going on behind the Republic lines throughout the war. Within the essential contradictions between two of the famous utterances by Durruti, the anarchist leader—"we renounced everything except victory" and "we are carrying on the war and the revolution at the same time"—exists possibly the best reason why Franco won. The left never could agree on its priorities here. When Barcelona introduced its experiments in collectivization (superbly depicted in all its folly by Fraser), the average worker's attitude was "everything is going to be fine, the revolution has been made." The first week saw production fall by 40 percent and in only a few industries did it ever pick up again. Like the Paris Commune of 1871, suddenly everybody "felt themselves in charge now and with the right to speak for themselves." Said a famous tenor: "Fine, since we are equal now I am going to collect the tickets at the door, and one of you can come up here and sing the lead." In the only movie made by this collectivized industry, "half way through, the male lead was arrested for high treason and espionage and was never seen again. . . ." While regional distrust made Madrid declare "Catalonia shall never make cartridges," the Socialists distrusted the Anarchists who distrusted the Trotskyites who distrusted the POUM (dissident Communists). Pim, pam, POUM! And everybody distrusted the Kremlin-faithful official PCE. "The Communist party tried to absorb, monopolise everything, acting with the wildest sectarianism," said a Socialist Youth; ". . . the impression was gained that Spain was in the Soviets' hands. That only alienated large sectors to our side." But possibly the PCE did have the *clearest* idea of how the war should be won. Certainly the lessons of disunity derived from Spain were studied with profit by every post-1945 left-wing liberation movement—and disregarded by Western moderates.

Spanish refugees on their way to France. Photo from *Life Goes to War.*

One of the most senior participants interviewed by Fraser, Saturnino Carod, the anarchist column commander, sums up sadly that maybe it was for the best that his side lost; for "the struggle between the conflicting forces . . . would have been so savage that all would have perished in the end." For all his sins, Franco at least did succeed in creating a prosperous middle class, with a vested interest in a non-revolutionary status quo which (so far) has stood post-Franco Spain in astonishingly good stead.

Having praised Fraser's remarkable opus, one does however have to ask just how reliable in general is the technique of oral history—especially when taken down nearly 40 years after the events. Don't trust eyewitness accounts, said that arch-cynic, Napoleon; "my Grenadiers in Russia saw only the back of the man in front." While writing about the French Army in World War I (in *The Price of Glory*), I was immeasurably aided by the life-work of a Franco-American professor, Jean Norton Cru's *Témoins*, in which he had collated and evaluated every *written* account by a French combatant. But these had been recorded at the time. Every once in a while one feels that Fraser should have attempted to evaluate *his* material. Some accounts (such as those qualified by "I was only a kid") must place too much reliability on human memory, others (such as that of the amateur tank-gunner who aimed his cannon by looking down the bore) must rate simply as dubious "good stories"; while many (particularly those relating, for instance, to Basque separatism) could be too subjective, partially owing to present-day conditioning.

Finally, there is one brief note that seems of outstanding topicality amid all the current argument on both sides of the Atlantic about non-politicization of the Olympics. On the very eve of the Civil War, as a counter to the Nazi Olympics in Berlin, the left organized a rival "Popular Olympiad" in Barcelona—for which Communists in Madrid were given free railway tickets, "because it was to be a large anti-fascist demonstration." Is there not perhaps a message here for 1980?

**Alistair Horne**

*Alistair Horne* is author of *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-62* (Penguin) and *Napoleon, Master of Europe, 1805-7* (Morrow.)

**Coming Soon:**
Malcolm Cowley on
Fitzgerald's Letters.



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## The Palestine Triangle
## by Nicholas Bethell
(G.P. Putnam; $12.95)

## Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate
## by Michael J. Cohen
(Holmes & Meyer; $24)

For some time now, the notion that the state of Israel was created to serve Anglo-American interests in the Middle East has been a cardinal tenet of the Soviet-inspired anti-Israel propaganda campaign. For obvious reasons, this view is an easy one for radical Arabs and Western leftists to embrace. An alternative analysis, espoused occasionally by more moderate Arabs and by sympathizers inclined toward a metaphysical rather than an economic view of history, holds that Israel represents an act of apology—an attempt by Europeans to assuage their guilt over the Holocaust by granting the surviving Jews a state. Thus those who murdered six million Jews sought to right the wrong by making powerless Arabs suffer.

The second theory scarcely requires rebutting—there simply wasn't any guilt to speak of. The first, however, has gained in respectability to a point where it is no longer solely the property of the hard left. The United Nations's "Zionism is Racism" resolution is nothing other than a natural by-product of the oft-repeated suggestion that Israel is a colonial settler-state.

The essential truth of Joseph Goebbels's Big Lie dictum was illustrated recently during the "crisis" in black-Jewish relations following the resignation of Andrew Young. Israel's relationship with South Africa—the Tel Aviv-Pretoria Axis, in international diplomatic parlance—was described by many in the United States, both white and black, as a major impediment to black-Jewish harmony. That Israel's ties to South Africa are economically insignificant by comparison with those of most of black Africa (and many of the Arab states) and militarily insignificant by comparison with those of Western European countries (not to speak of Czechoslovakia) is not the point. Anything, no matter how outrageous, will, if repeated often enough, slowly but surely take on the aspect of truth. Indeed, the more outrageous the lie, the more likely it is to appear credible—where there's smoke, there must be fire.

What is of interest is that the charges of an Israeli-South African conspiracy, like the Zionism is Racism campaign, are an outgrowth of the claim that Israel's very creation was part of an imperialist plot. This distortion of history is essential to the ideological assault on Israel's legitimacy. And those who know the true story have become fewer and fewer in number, while the ranks of the "anti-Zionists" continue to swell with new converts. James Baldwin told his readers in *The Nation* last fall that "Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews . . . but for the salvation of Western interests."

The lie expressed here is one that many tell deliberately, but that others echo out of ignorance. (In Baldwin's case, it may be that the two coincide.) Neither Nicholas Bethell's *Palestine Triangle* nor Michael J. Cohen's *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate* is likely to impede the effort to rewrite history, orchestrated in Moscow and harmonized in Beirut and Damascus. But these two studies of the conflict between the Jewish national movement and imperial Britain still are valuable for their uncompromising objectivity and for the new light they shed on an important part of the recent past.

In several respects the two books are complementary. Cohen deals with the years 1936-45, beginning with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine and concluding with the end of World War II (he plans a successor volume). Bethell also covers the war years, but devotes a good deal of this book to the three turbulent years leading up to the British withdrawal from Palestine in 1948. Cohen shows himself master of diplomatic history. Working largely with British state papers released under the 30-year secrecy rule, as well as with material from the Central Zionist Archives and the Weizmann Archives, Cohen has provided a careful, concise, and utterly superb study of the making of British Palestine policy during the period in question.

Lord Bethell's previous work, *The Last Secret*, a study of the forcible repatriation by the British and American governments of two million Russians to the Soviet Union, was written before most of the relevant documents had been released. He demonstrates here that he is entirely adept at handling archival material. As in *The Last Secret*, Bethell makes admirable use of oral history. And thanks to his anecdotal style, his book is easier to come to grips with than Cohen's, particularly for readers unfamiliar with the complex history of the Palestine conflict.

A British-born Israeli, Cohen is able to see and to depict the formulation of British policy from the British side. Thus he avoids the pitfall of assuming malice when the explanation of either ignorance or perceived exigency is more appropriate. His painstaking examination of the origins of the 1939 White Paper, an inhuman document which all but shut the gates of Palestine to Jews just as the Holocaust was about to begin, reveals Britain considering the Palestine problem "mainly from the point of view of its effect on the international situation," as Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain minuted in late April 1939. Chamberlain's conclusion, based on this premise and prompted neither by anti-Semitism nor by philo-Arabism, was simple and abrupt: "If we must offend one side, let us offend the Jews rather than the Arabs."

Cohen also shows the indecisiveness with which Britain confronted the problem. London was animated by a desire to protect British economic and strategic interests in the region, by fear of Arab unrest, by a profound suspicion of American and Soviet intentions in the Middle East, and by an increasing sense that Jewish and British interests in Palestine were irreconcilable. Cohen traces the ultimately unsuccessful wartime effort by an overburdened Winston Churchill to steer British policy back in the pro-Zionist direction of the bygone Balfour period. And he analyzes the crisis in the Zionist leadership that came with the realization that Britain would not be won over by good faith, cooperative effort, and constructive labor. This realization resulted in the political demise of Chaim Weizmann, the movement's Anglophilic elder statesman, and the ascendancy of David Ben Gurion and of the Palestine-based Labor Zionist activists who displaced Weizmann's "Anglo-Saxon" entourage.

Cohen displays particular skill in his attempt to distinguish among the views and interests of various British departments—the prime minister, the foreign office, the colonial office, the military. And he identifies the cycle of action and reaction, often based on



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perception rather than sure knowledge, that informed the British-Zionist relationship.

This relationship is Bethell's concern as well. The third point in his Palestine "triangle," the Arabs, gets short shrift in his book. That this should be the case is perhaps not surprising in a study of this period. The Arabs of Palestine, and the Arab states, said a great deal but did very little during the final years of the British Mandate. The Jews smuggled immigrants into Palestine, established new settlements, and conducted skillful international diplomacy, forging ties with France and with imperialism's enemy, the Soviet Union. And finally, the Zionists waged a guerrilla terrorist campaign against the Mandatory government. If the Zionists were assessed by the British largely on the basis of what they did, the Arabs were evaluated on the basis of what it was thought they might do. Bethell, therefore, focuses on what was in fact a bilateral conflict—the Arabs, the third party, being, so to speak, absent participants.

Bethell offers new and fascinating information about British efforts to block Jewish flight from Nazi Europe to Palestine and does not slight instances of British duplicity, pig-headedness, and brutality. But a 1945 quotation from Labour Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, perhaps the man most responsible for Britain's squalid war against the refugee ships carrying survivors of the Holocaust to Palestine, illustrates the moral complexity of the issues. Bevin spoke to Weizmann and Moshe Shertok with great emotion two days after coordinated Haganah, Irgun, and Stern Group attacks on British installations inaugurated the United Resistance movement in Palestine: "I cannot bear English tommies being killed. They are innocent. . . . I do not want any Jews killed either, but I love the British soldiers. They belong to my class. They are working people. . . ."

Were British and Zionist interests fundamentally at odds? Probably they were. But it is likely nevertheless that Britain could have forced the Zionists to accept much less than they eventually got, and salvaged much of its own position, had London offered some concession on the issue of Jewish sovereignty in part of Palestine, or even, at the war's end, simply on the admission of the 100,000 survivors languishing in displaced persons camps. In the end, a combination of skillfully manipulated international pressure and armed struggle forced Britain to abandon Palestine. New evidence shows clearly that in the past too little importance was ascribed by Zionist historians to the impact of the Irgun-Stern Group military/terror campaign on the British decision to withdraw. But it is good to remember that Britain's ability to suppress that campaign, and to break the Haganah, was constrained by the very nature of Britain as a democracy. So long as the Zionists were ostensibly willing to negotiate, Britain could not, in full view of the world, undertake all-out violent counter-measures. Thus the moderates in the Zionist camp, by virtue of their moderation, made it possible for the activists to pursue the path of armed resistance.

The role of the United States during this period was ambiguous. Britain and America rarely were able to coordinate policy, notions of a joint imperialist conspiracy notwithstanding. The Truman White House did assist the Zionist cause on several critical occasions. But domestic political concerns and genuine sentiment on the part of President Truman were behind this, not a consideration of American foreign policy interests. In fact, the State Department opposed Truman on this issue at every turn, siding firmly with the British, i.e. with the Arabs.

As these two books demonstrate, Israel was born not of a grand imperial design, but of a struggle against such a design. When the British were forced from Palestine they retreated into the Arab hinterland and sought to intensify their relationship with their Arab clients. But Palestine had seen the Middle East's first successful revolt against the British crown. The Zionist victory loosened the British grip on the Middle East and accelerated Britain's withdrawal from the region. This is why the Soviets, with pronounced imperial ambitions of their own, aided Palestine Jewry in 1948. Moscow soon discovered that neighboring turf was far more inviting. And so the Soviets turned their attention to the Arabs and began to rewrite history with that brazen disregard for the truth for which they are justly notorious. Soon Arab spokesmen joined in this recasting. This is the genesis of the lies that now confront us.

**Eric Breindel**

*Eric Breindel* is writing a book on Allied policy toward refugees in the Nazi era.

## Cold Storage
## by Wendell Rawls, Jr.

(Simon & Schuster; $10.95)

During the first two decades of the 20th century and extending into the mid-1960s, a doctrine of liberal reform took hold in America. This doctrine, which united the early settlement-house social workers with the later liberals of the New and Fair Deal eras, began with the perception that the miseries of the modern industrial system required the intervention of the state and that poverty, crime, and mental illness were environmentally caused and had to be treated.

The Progressive movement during the early 1900s was primarily responsible for this move away from punishment and toward care. It was during this period that practically every major American city organized juvenile courts—not to punish delinquents but to prescribe what was in their best interests. It was also during this period that the asylum was invented. Repulsed by the wretched condition of the insane in poorhouses and jails, Progressive reformers first asserted that insanity was curable and, like other diseases, would yield to proper treatment. The key to proper treatment was the creation of a different environment. If insanity, crime, and delinquency were environmentally caused, then a benevolent government was obligated to establish alternative environments where victims (now even criminals were to be seen as victims) could be treated in isolation from the contaminating conditions that had caused their deviant behavior. This analysis led directly to long-term institutionalization. During the early part of the century, state after state authorized the construction of asylums.

A fundamental assumption of this reform movement was that the state was benevolent. Since Progressive reformers themselves meant only to help, they saw the expanded power of



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the state as unambiguously good. They fought to establish dominion over people's lives which in other contexts might have been seen as totalitarian, but which to them seemed rehabilitative.

Moral treatment became the order of the day. The new asylum would no longer abandon society's victims, but rather, as the historian David Rothman has written, "would arrange and administer a disciplined routine that would curb uncontrolled impulses without cruelty or unnecessary punishment. . . . [H]ospital walls would enclose a new world for the insane, designed in the reverse image of the one they had left." Finally, the length of custody could not be fixed. Since punishment was not part of the reason for custody, "patients" would remain for as long as necessary or until they were cured. For many that would turn out to be a lifetime.

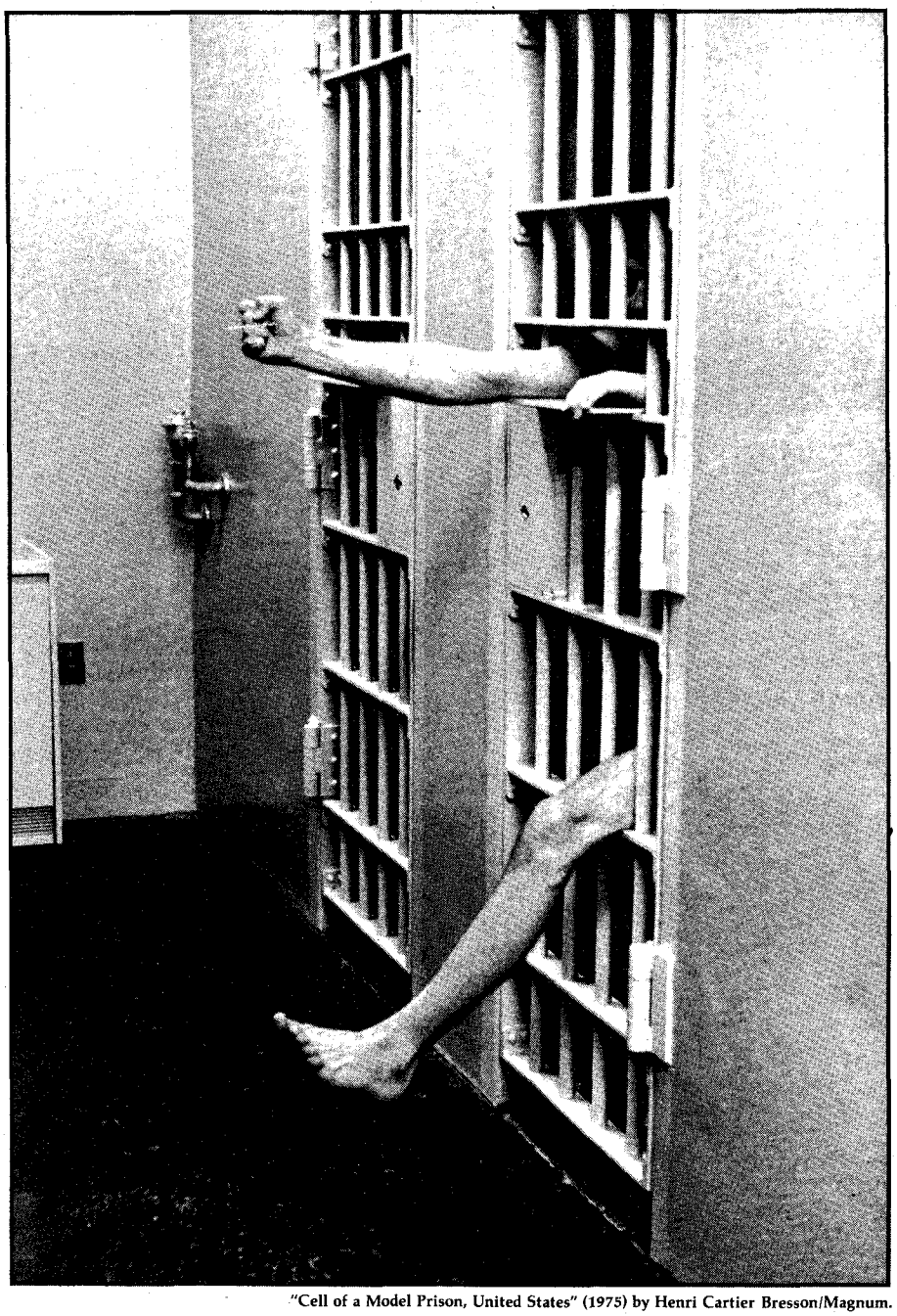
It was in this context that Farview State Hospital for the Criminally Insane was established by the state of Pennsylvania in 1909. When the cornerstone was laid for the hospital's construction, Dr. Charles G. Wagner, then superintendent of the State Hospital for the Insane at Binghamton, had this to say:

> If there were places of this kind available, there would be no longer any excuse for the deplorable practice of placing the insane even temporarily in common jails where, often . . . they are grossly ill-treated. . . . Concentrated effort on behalf of the individual patient will be the watchword of the future.
>
> Your wards will be well-ventilated apartments, lighted by electricity, heated by steam, and comfortably furnished, with carpetings on the floors, pictures on the walls and draperies at the windows; for all of these things help to banish the idea of prison bars and to make an environment that tends to aid the recovery of the patient.

There could be no better expression of the bright hopes of the Progressive reformers. *Cold Storage* is the story of what happened to those hopes, of how Farview Hospital actually turned out. It is also a case history—one among many, unfortunately—of the unintended effects of benevolent reform and of the folly of vesting too much discretionary power in the state. The book-jacket blurb promises to take the reader into a world "where men live, eat and die like animals, with no hope of treatment, mercy or release, beaten by guards, terrorized by each other, ignored by an indifferent medical staff." For once, a blurb is not hyperbole.

Unlike most journalistic exposés, *Cold Storage* draws us into the lives of a half-dozen inmates, and we come to share, if only remotely, their terrors and their despair. Perhaps the most poignant story is about a man the author calls Paul Kirchoff. In 1938 Paul had a secure job as an accountant, after earning his college degree at night, and was beginning to feel that despite the Depression, he and his wife and two small children were going to make it. One summer afternoon, in the front yard of his mother's home, he became involved in a loud argument with his younger brother. A neighbor, irritated by the noise, called the police. Kirchoff was arrested and sentenced to 30 days for disorderly conduct. Despite his protestations that the argument had been entirely personal, that no violence had occurred, and that the sentence would cost him his new job as well as his young family's security, he was hauled off to jail. Once there, he was shoved into a cell and, angry and frustrated, he shoved back. That led to an extension of his sentence. He insisted that he had been railroaded, that his family was suffering unjustly, and that his jailors were responsible. He fought with a prisoner who laughed at him. And then one day he was put in a car and taken to a mental "hospital." "Nobody told him why. His family was told that he was unable to control his anger and could not be released from custody until his mental state improved. His wife could not afford legal advice."

Kirchoff continued to protest that he was being unfairly prosecuted. The hospital decided he was paranoid. One



"Cell of a Model Prison, United States" (1975) by Henri Cartier Bresson/Magnum.



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physician, according to Rawls, diagnosed him as "friendly, talkative, and smiling, but at times [he] becomes insistent about the injustice of being committed here." That insistence became the chief evidence of his mental illness, and soon he was subjected to insulin shock therapy. Thirty-one comas were induced in him, to no avail. "He repeats continually that there is nothing wrong with him, that he is being tortured by the treatment and is being held here for no reason," the doctors said. They also pronounced him guilty of "progressive irritableness, insistence upon his rights and illogical thinking."

Eventually he was transferred to Farview, where he was kept for nearly 30 years. He received no treatment and only rarely saw a doctor. His continued incarceration was based on his delusion that there was nothing wrong with him. When a fellow "patient" asked "why are you still here?" Kirchoff answered "'cause they won't let me go." His colleague in moral treatment persisted: "I mean, why are they keeping you here?" "'Cause they can," Kirchoff replied, "'Cause they want to."

His mother long dead, his wife remarried, Paul Kirchoff was never again to see his children. He was finally released a few years ago thanks to the efforts of a young civil rights lawyer. One wonders what the Progressive reformers might have thought of their bright hopes if confronted by the shattered life of Paul Kirchoff.

*Cold Storage* is full of such stories. But it has one deficiency. It allows the uninformed to conclude that Farview Hospital might have been an aberration, the result, perhaps, of particular cruelty. That conclusion would be unfortunate. As my colleague Bruce J. Ennis has observed in another similar book,

> . . . the stories in this book are not unusual. Not at all. They were chosen not because they are particularly shocking, but because they are so typical of what it means to be a mental patient in the United States. . . . I knew there [were] abuses in the system. . . . I did not know the abuses were endemic to the system, that the system itself was a failure. . . . [T]he real tradgedy of the mental hospital system is that few of the patients in the back wards get better, and many of the patients in the front wards get worse. It is now beyond dispute—even among psychiatrists—that prolonged hospitalization is, in itself, antitherapeutic. The patient who has successfully adapted to the structured, authoritarian world of the mental hospital would find it difficult to adapt again to the real world, and that difficulty decreases his chance of ever being discharged.

The fact is that the Progressive reformers were wrong in their basic assumptions. Paul Kirchoff was a victim not of a mean-spirited society but of the liberal social environment created to "treat" him. Though *Cold Storage* is as compelling a description of the horrors of such places as I have ever read, it invites the conclusion that reform of such institutions is possible. In fact, that is not true. Reform, in this case, is the enemy of repeal. Better treatment or less sadistic guards will not eliminate the abuses described in *Cold Storage* any more than Dr. Wagner's dreams could determine what ultimately happened at Farview. Books like *Cold Storage* will have to be written again and again until such institutions are abolished and the assumptions upon which they are based are abandoned.

**Ira Glasser**

*Ira Glasser* is executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union and co-author of *Doing Good* (Pantheon).


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## World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States by Paul L. Murphy

(Norton; $16.95)

According to Roger Baldwin, the sempiternal paladin of the Bill of Rights, the term "civil liberties" was first used in the United States with the founding, largely by Baldwin, of the Civil Liberties Bureau in 1917. The bureau, a precursor of the American Civil Liberties Union, was formed to counter a national state of mind hostile to such notions as free speech. It was a climate of opinion in which the president, Woodrow Wilson, when questioned about tolerance for dissent, thundered that "loyalty to this flag is the first test of tolerance." And Attorney General Thomas Gregory, when he was asked about dissenters, proclaimed: "May God have mercy on them, for they need expect none from an outraged people and an avenging government."

In his chillingly detailed dissection of the government's invincible ignorance of civil liberties during World War I, Paul Murphy, professor of history and American studies at the University of Minnesota, explains why the Bill of Rights had fallen into disuse. A consensus had grown in the 19th century that such liberties as free speech and freedom from arbitrary search and seizure

> were only to be protected for those citizens who had demonstrated, both by their attitudes and their behavior, that they were prepared to utilize those freedoms in positive and constructive ways. The decision as to whether a citizen deserved to have his civil liberties formally protected was to be made by those responsible elements within the society that were knowledgeable in the proper use of personal freedom.

Excluded, therefore, were such irresponsible elements as radicals, including labor agitators; the new, hyphenated and thereby not yet fully tested Americans; and uppity women.

Moreover, those cast outside the protection of the Constitution by the respectable folk in towns, cities, and states had no place to appeal. James Madison had failed to get what he considered his "most valuable amendment" into the Bill of Rights—a provision forbidding Congress and the individual states from abridging freedom of speech. It was not until 1925 that the Supreme Court finally declared that the Bill of Rights, through the due process clause of the 14th Amendment, applied to the states as well as to the federal government.

Accordingly, by 1917, as free-speech historian Zechariah Chafee noted,

> the First Amendment had no hold on



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people's minds because no live facts or concrete images were then attached to it. Consequently, like an empty box, with beautiful words on it, the Amendment collapsed under the impact of Prussian battalions, and terror of Bolshevik mobs.

With regard to federal civil liberties protections, the record of the Supreme Court in the 19th century is almost entirely barren of robust affirmations of the First Amendment or of any other kind of individual liberties. And that is why, in 1917, the meaning of the First Amendment was no more compelling to members of Congress and the Executive than it was to their state and local counterparts—let alone, as Chafee said, to the people as a whole.

When the Wilson administration, therefore, criminalized dissent through the Espionage Act and then the Sedition and Alien Acts—with similar state laws further subverting the First Amendment—the vast majority of the citizenry enthusiastically approved, their zeal often leading to spontaneous acts of repressive patriotism which were winked at by local authorities. In Mount Olive, Missouri, for example, a mob led by prominent businessmen "compelled P. Hein, a leading merchant charged with making disloyal remarks, to kneel on the icy sidewalk in his night clothes and kiss each of the forty-eight stars in the flag."

Meanwhile, under the Espionage Act of 1917, which penalized disloyal utterances, there were over 1000 convictions, including Eugene Debs, leaders of the Wobblies, and diverse rank-and-file dissenters. Radical and libertarian publications were banned from the mails, an action sustained by the Supreme Court in 1921. Magazines that could still use the mails were so fearful of government sanctions that a number of them, including *The New Republic*, refused to run ads by Wobblies trying to raise money for their defense during an Espionage Act trial.

The nation's bar, with a few exceptions, treated the Bill of Rights with as much contempt as the government. Attorneys were disbarred for having the wrong clients or for expressing the wrong ideas on their own. And the American Bar Association unanimously endorsed a resolution condemning all attempts

> to hinder and embarrass the Government of the United States in carrying on the war with vigor and effectiveness. . . . Under whatever cover of pacifism or technicality such attempts are made, we deem them to be in spirit pro-German and in effect giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

As for the jurists trying the multitude of federal and state defendants accused of criminal free speech, the vast majority, Murphy points out,

> simply took the position that dissent was solely a matter of personal interest which had to give way, like other personal desires, the moment it interfered with the broader interests of the nation. To have maintained that the nation might benefit from preserving First Amendment rights intact was both beyond their conception and comprehension. . . .

Nor was the judicial climate on the Supreme Court much different. When Emma Goldman appealed her conviction for hindering the draft, her lawyer argued before the Court in 1918 that the First Amendment protected her and that the draft itself was unconstitutional. A furious Chief Justice Edward White then excoriated Goldman's lawyer for exhibiting a disturbing lack of patriotism. White later spoke for a unanimous Court in affirming Emma Goldman's guilt.

The fledgling National Civil Liberties Bureau, as it came to be called, was itself raided and when a staff lawyer argued that the government was violating the Bureau's right to keep confidential communications to itself, the discussion ended when the federal agent in charge drew a revolver. Roger Baldwin discovered that there had been wiretaps on his phone which revealed to the government not only his opposition to what was happening to the First Amendment but also that he was "not leading a moral life."

Through his remarkably wide-ranging research and his ability to distill his material into a generally crisp narrative, Murphy has given the anti-libertarian sweep of the home front during World War I much greater immediacy, as well as historical perspective, than any other work on the subject. And he is accurately ominous about the portents of those years.

On a much more pervasive scale than ever before, the federal government had adopted "a national policy of deliberate and massive mind control" by criminalizing "'wrong' ideas, disloyal expression, and suspect association." In the past, agitators and other dissenters had largely been handled locally by private power groups, often in conjunction with local government forces. But the precedent had now been established for the federalization of proper thinking. While a constituency for civil liberties did evolve in reaction to the "mind control" of World War I, it did not prove nearly strong enough to counter effectively such galloping anti-libertarianism of later years as that generated by the House Un-American Activities Committee and Senator Joseph McCarthy.

There was, to be sure, far more dissent, most of it unpunished, during the Vietnam War than during World War I, but the actual strength of the civil liberties constituency in the nation remains problematic. For instance, there has been exceedingly little press attention, and no discernible public outcry, concerning Ted Kennedy's Criminal Code Reform Act of 1980 (S.1722), which includes preventive detention, permits the government to appeal "lenient" sentences (thereby greatly bruising the double jeopardy provision of the Fifth Amendment), and also imposes a multitude of sanctions against the exercise of speech and assembly. (One section is deliberately aimed at demonstrators against nuclear energy facilities.) Yet, so far as I have been able to discover, Kennedy has not been asked—in any of the myriad interviews with him—about this Wilsonian bill.

As for the future of civil liberties support, a recent Gallup poll asked: "Do you know what the First Amendment is


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or what it deals with?" Only 24 percent of all those polled did know. And only 42 percent of the college-educated respondents knew the answer.

I hope Paul Murphy's book is widely used in courses around the nation—high school as well as college. And some libertarian philanthropist might send a copy to each member of Congress, starting with the senior senator from Massachusetts.

**Nat Hentoff**

*Nat Hentoff*, staff writer for the *Village Voice* and the *New Yorker*, is the author of the newly published *The First Freedom: The Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America* (Delacorte).

# Brief Review

## And No Birds Sang by Farley Mowat

(Little Brown, An Atlantic Monthly Press book; $10.95)

The time of this memoir is 1943, the forgotten year of World War II. The place is Italy, its forgotten theater. The men doing the fighting and dying are Canadians, and who remembers their contribution to the war? Beginning with the Allied landings in Sicily in July 1943, Farley Mowat, who was then a criminally young lieutenant and is now a well-known naturalist and nature-writer, tells the story of the progressive decimation of his regiment as it bleeds its way first across Sicily and then 400 painful miles up the Italian peninsula to the banks of the Morrow River southeast of Rome. There Mowat's regiment is ordered into an insane attack, his closest friend is killed charging a German machine gun, and Mowat himself is nearly driven out of his mind by fear and grief before, providentially, he is transferred to a "previously despised" staff job. In the early going there are moments of farcical service comedy, but the tone soon turns grim and the images become appalling:

> Something struck my right foot a numbing blow and a stunning concussion flung me face down into the mud. I heard screaming close at hand, and, struggling to my knees, saw Kennedy on *his* knees in the center of the smoking road, shaking his head slowly from side to side like an old and tired dog, but the screaming was not his. Ten feet behind him the runner, a young lad whose name I never knew, was humping jerkily away from his own leg which had been severed at the thigh. In the instant that I saw him, he gave one final bubbling shriek, collapsed, and mercifully was still.

Most authors write for cash and glory, and one is not inclined to credit their complaints that the work is hard when one thinks of a bricklayer sweating under the summer sun. But I would believe Farley Mowat if he said, which he does not, that writing this book was a lacerating ordeal. He did it for a purpose: to discredit the "Old Lie" that it is sweet to die for one's country. (He feared, and quite correctly it seems, that the lie was winning new credence as the memory of Vietnam receded.) Wisely, he confines his anger to a brief epilogue, and this makes his work gain in power. Without ideology or stylistic display to distract us, the horrific particulars of his experience stand out like truth. It is an experience that our more bellicose columnists and intellectuals should ponder; for it might complicate the ardor with which they cant about defending "our vital national interests" in callous nescience of our real vital interest, the too-vulnerable flesh of our young men and women.

**Jack Beatty**

**Correspondence**, *from page 7*

inflationary pressures we are under. Rather, sustained good sense in fiscal and monetary policy, along with a willingness to face up to the various interest groups attempting to protect themselves from economic reality, present a much better and hence more serious prospect for relief.

*Marc L. Fleischaker*
*Chevy Chase, Maryland*


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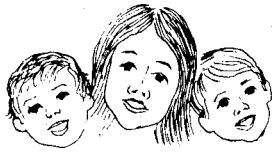

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# Jerusalem Diarist

**If visiting Israel** is still very much a stirring experience it's not because of the present government, which has been presiding these last two years and more over an unprecedented emigration of young people out of the country. This *yeridah* ("going down" as opposed to *aliyah* or "going up") would persuade anyone just a bit more reasonable than Menahem Begin that his kind of Zionism is not what Zionists, born and bred, want. But Begin is not one much moved by facts. Adversity evokes from him a politics of spite, for any instance of which his ideological baggage readily provides some justification of principle: the Bible, history, destiny, natural rights. The authority of his visions, however, fails to bind together the restive ruling coalition of religious fanatics, nationalist delusionaries, free market obsessives, and a tiny handful of timid liberal reformers. The government would long ago have lost a parliamentary vote of confidence if its factions did not feel that new elections would turn them out of office wholesale, and return Labor to power. Perhaps—if the polls are right—a simple majority might, for the first time since the establishment of the state, allow it to govern independent of the cranky and dogmatic margins.

**Maybe it's some** compensating reflex, but the most cynical and dishonest circles in the Israeli body politic are those who roll their eyes toward heaven. Only a long comic novel could do justice to the religious establishment. For starters, however: there are two chief rabbis in the country. The two don't talk to each other. There are also two parallel chief rabbis in virtually every city, and it's my impression that ordinarily they don't talk to each other either. If one says black the other says white. In Jerusalem there's a struggle going on now about who's entitled to declare meat kosher, which is to say fit, but it's not a head-on-head competition between the disputant chief rabbis: various orthodox dynasties, usually tracing their lineage back to some sage from Europe, have entered the fray like warring Mafia families. When discourse fails, violence works its wonders: mayhem one day in the labyrinthine alleys of the faithful city reverberates—in blood and bruises—the next in the streets of Brooklyn. The most religiously extreme of the religious parties, the Agudah, thinks of itself as being non-Zionist, Zionism having usurped the Messiah's function by ingathering the exiles without a divine traffic light. Over this party's shoulder—its super-ego and crazed conscience—is a cadre of rabid anti-Zionists. From these ranks came soldiers who fought along with the Arabs to keep Jerusalem out of Jewish hands. Not long ago they petitioned Arafat to free the city from the heathens. The genuinely less extreme religious party, the Mavdal, competes for support with its ultras by agitating also against modernity—autopsies, for example. But its heart, one senses, is in the political struggles of Israel's nationalist right to settle the West Bank, especially where it will most provoke Arabs and offend their pride. These pious types form part of the cornerstone of the "not one inch" bloc. They won't allow their women to be conscripted. Nor are they adverse to keeping their men away from the front too. Someone's got to do the praying.

**You may rightly gather** from the above that I'm not in sympathy with Israeli settlement in Arab-populated areas of the West Bank, even if the partriarchs and matriarchs lived and died there. But I have no respect for that double standard so common among the enlightened which takes at face value, and as a guide to policy besides, every assertion of Arab historic and religious rights, and is so disdainful of comparable rights when claimed by Jews. If the world must stand on its head to placate the king of Saudi Arabia and every other furious Moslem because Jerusalem is said to be the third most holy city of Islam, then Cyrus Vance shouldn't get apoplectic if a few Jewish zealots want to live in Jewish-owned houses in Hebron, where Jews lived for millennia until the bloody pogrom of 1929 and which is, alas, after Jerusalem, certainly Judaism's second most holy city.

**It's just about a year** since the *Washington Post* came out with its now universally discredited story about systematic Israeli torture of Arab prisoners (see "Torturing the Truth," *TNR*, February 24, 1979). The *Post* story was timed last year to coincide with the release of the State Department's annual international survey of human rights. Chastened, this year's surveyers didn't exactly say that all was perfect with Israel in the occupied territories. But they gave Israel's record on human rights very high marks indeed. There's an important postscript to the torture tale, carried by wire services but not noted (why?) in the *Washington Post*. Niall MacDermot, secretary general of the International Commission of Jurists, told the Human Rights Commission about his investigation into charges of torturing Arab suspects: "I received no reports of physical torture. If there was a continuing practice of this kind I feel sure that the defense lawyers to whom I spoke would have known of it."

**The big lie** these days lives a prosperous life, and the biggest lie is the one endorsed by the UN, that Zionism equals racism. So now comes the government-controlled Warsaw press charging that Polish jokes—racist jokes—were invented and popularized by "Zionist circles" in Israel and the US. How the Polish Communists can sustain their enmity to the Jews in a country they've made virtually *Judenrein* is a mystery. The Zionism-is-racism libel appeared again late last month in Rome where someone taking responsibility for the bombing of El Al's offices there explained that "Zionism, together with Turkish Fascism, is responsible for the genocide of the Armenians in 1915." How do you answer that one? The big lie has even infected Hugh Trevor-Roper, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. In the *New York Times Book Review* of January 27, 1980, Trevor-Roper almost off-handedly observes that Zionism and Nazism have "more common features than can comfortably be spelled out." Does so stunning an equation of the liberation movement of a much victimized people with its most brutal victimizers not at least require some argument and amplification? I don't know how Trevor-Roper came by his opinions about Zionism. But I do know that he is phobic about Jews. Not many years ago Trevor-Roper had proposed that Oxford bestow an honorary degree on President Bhutto, a martyr since his execution but then just another third world tyrant. A young Sanskrit scholar named Gombrich, the son of art historian E. H. Gombrich, roused some faculty opposition. The proposition was brought before a meeting of "congregation," anybody with an Oxford MA. Opponents and supporters filed out, left and right, placing pins in parchment for the tally. Bhutto was rejected, and his sponsor went around sourly blaming the Jews: "I watched them as they marched out."

**M.P.**



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